



**REVISED FEASIBILITY AND SUITABILITY STUDY FOR ADDITIONAL ROUTES OF THE  
OREGON, MORMON PIONEER, CALIFORNIA, AND PONY EXPRESS NATIONAL  
HISTORIC TRAILS:**

**APPENDIX A: STUDY ROUTE DESCRIPTIONS AND HISTORICAL OVERVIEWS**

**SEPTEMBER 2017**

*Cover: "Westport Landing," watercolor, William Henry Jackson, SCBL\_280, Scotts Bluff National Monument, NPS*

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**National Park Service  
2017**





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## **APPENDIX A: STUDY ROUTES AND HISTORICAL SUMMARIES**

### **METHODOLOGY**

In 2009, Congress directed the secretary of the interior to conduct the Four-Trails Feasibility Study to consider the feasibility, suitability, and desirability of adding routes to the existing Oregon, California, Pony Express, and Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trails. Because documentation efforts concerning many of these routes have been ongoing for nearly 20 years, the locational and historical information provided in this study is much more detailed than what is typically available for feasibility study work. The study itself is a separate document, but this appendix provides the analytical basis for the findings of the study.

### **STUDY ROUTE DESCRIPTIONS**

Much of the route information presented here was gathered and mapped by independent researchers and scholars, including longtime trail aficionados and professional historians and archeologists, between the mid-1990s and 2013. They have shared their work with the National Park Service (NPS) for the purposes of this feasibility study and any related future planning efforts. Route and historical background information also was gathered for the NPS by consulting historians Evans-Hatch & Associates, of Astoria, Oregon, between 2000 and 2004. The US Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) provided additional mapping information gathered during cultural resource surveys related to federal undertakings along the study routes. In most cases, those surveys were conducted by private consulting firms and paid for by proponents of the undertaking, but in some instances, federal archeologists conducted the inventory. USFS and BLM also provided mapping information resulting from federally permitted, research-driven archeological projects that were unrelated to federal undertakings. Where detailed mapping information provided by federal land managers differed from that of other sources, the NPS used the agency information. The NPS did not attempt to collect and analyze all the individual site and survey reports from the state historic preservation offices of the 13 affected states.

In identifying and mapping the trail routes under study, researchers relied heavily on such primary sources as emigrant journals, General Land Office (GLO) survey notes and plats, military maps, historical newspaper reports, legal records, and other 19th-century documentation. Emigrant journals are useful in such work because they typically mention known landmarks, river crossings, mileages, and characteristics of the terrain that can be used to identify routes of travel. GLO survey plats, which represent the lines surveyed for the establishment of township and section boundaries, sometimes show roads, houses, watercourses, and other built and natural features that surveyors observed on or near exterior section lines. The surveyors' field notes from which the plats were drafted may "provide a report on the character of the land, soil, and timber traversed by the survey" (Thompson 1988:11). Historical newspaper accounts often report events, stagecoach and mail schedules (including listings of stations), and places and persons on the trails; and legal records can yield information about station locations, historic roads, and other key properties along the study routes. In addition to these primary resources, local lore and traditions often point to locations where events of note happened and offer clues to the location of old trails; and oral histories, reminiscences, letters, and biographical writings provide accounts by people who experienced the emigration, witnessed it, or recall seeing trail trace, pioneer graves, or artifacts on their land in the early to mid-20th century. Researchers can use these documents and corresponding local traditions to identify trail-related sites such as emigrant campsites and river crossings, and then reference topographic maps to interpolate reasonable routes between those points. This kind of documentary research, to varying degrees, was the foundation of the route identification process for nearly all the feasibility study routes.

Researchers sometimes utilized online satellite images, which can yield visual evidence of trail that is imperceptible at ground level. For some routes (for example, the Cherokee Trail, the Meek and Goodale

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

cutoffs, and much of the Bidwell-Bartleson Route), researchers also conducted a “windshield survey” or more intensive archeological field survey to identify physical evidence of trail routes on the ground, in order to verify the trail location, in a process called “ground-truthing.” These researchers, in coordination with public land managers, explored likely routes in search of wagon ruts and swales, linear vegetation growth and ground surface changes caused by traffic compacting the earth, wagon wheel marks on rocks, blazed or otherwise-modified trees, artifact scatters, inscriptions, and emigrant graves. Often, too, where direct physical evidence is not visible on the ground surface, wagon trail experts can read the terrain and determine where wagons would have traveled, wherever possible avoiding drainages and wet areas, steep climbs, and hillside crossings where wagons, with their high center of gravity, would have been in danger of tipping over. Systematic visual examinations account for or contribute to many of the study route alignments.

In some cases, though, the route alignments are largely or purely interpolated, based on a researcher’s historically informed reasoning as to where a trail ran from beginning to end or where it crossed wide expanses between known points. This process was used where researchers have located little or no historical documentation that provides clues to the exact route, where historical documentation exists but is insufficient to identify the route, and/or where little or no ground-truthing has been undertaken (or it has been done, but physical evidence of the trail could not confidently be identified). Some of the study routes or portions of routes are almost purely interpolated; many are partly interpolated but otherwise well documented; and some are almost completely field surveyed.

Using these approaches, researchers plotted the study routes mostly on 1:100,000-scale topographic base maps. NPS staff and volunteers then used those maps and other information to prepare the more generalized study maps and route descriptions provided in this document. Trail lines on the study maps represent general route corridors rather than precise alignments of physical, historic trail tread, much of which has yet to be field-identified, surveyed, and documented. Route maps and descriptions provided here include trail alternates but do not necessarily identify every braid or minor variant over which wagons traveled. Minor braids and variants lie within the general trail corridors under consideration.

In several instances, different researchers reached different conclusions concerning major study route alignments. These differences are described within the individual study route summaries.

## **HISTORICAL SUMMARIES AND USE ANALYSES**

In addition to route descriptions, volunteers, consultants, and NPS staff gathered information concerning the history and use of the feasibility study routes by emigrants to California, Oregon, and Utah. This information, provided in this document in the historical summary sections prepared for each route, was compiled for use by the NPS planning team in evaluating the historical significance of the routes and assessing their association with the existing, designated national historic trails.

The NPS recognizes that nearly all these routes follow long-established American Indian trade and migration trails that predate other historical uses. Many of the routes also were traveled by explorers and mountain men, missionaries, and government surveyors; and used by freight and stage lines, livestock drives, the military, and the railroads. However, because the emigration routes are under study specifically for their association with the Oregon, California, and/or Utah emigrations, the historical summaries and assessments of significance focus on their mid-19th-century development and use as long-distance covered wagon (or Pony Express) trails.

The emigration of Mormons (members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or LDS) to Utah differs in important ways from the Oregon and California emigrations. Consequently, sources of data and the analyses that flow from those two kinds of emigrations are different as well. Theirs was a highly organized, institutionally directed emigration.

The Mormon emigration was planned and directed by church officials for the purpose of delivering converts to a single destination, the Salt Lake Valley in Utah. Plans were implemented by appointed

coordinators and captains. Mormon emigrants were expected to travel and work in assigned companies and to comply with leadership direction and decisions, and they were systematically encouraged to document their journey for posterity. Thanks to the Mormon pioneer penchant for record keeping, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been able to compile an extensive archive of Mormon Trail journals and reminiscences and has created a comprehensive online emigration database for Mormon Trail researchers. The LDS emigration data are arguably the most complete and reliable of all the emigration trail data currently available, allowing researchers to determine with fair accuracy how many Mormon emigrants utilized any given route.

Data on use of certain study routes by Mormon emigrants to Utah were obtained by NPS staff primarily from the LDS Church History searchable database for Mormon Pioneer Overland Travel, 1847–1868, found at <http://history.lds.org/overlandtravels/home?lang=eng>. This comprehensive database provides company names, company rosters (insofar as they are known), places of departure and arrival, and trail-related excerpts of original journals, autobiographies, reminiscences, and other original documents relating to the Mormon emigration. Mormon-related research posted on the Kansas History Web Sites (<http://www.kansashistory.us>) and on the Mormon Trails Association website (<http://www.mormontrails.org>) also was consulted. LDS Church historians, archivists, and volunteer researchers assisted NPS staff in gathering and fact-checking this material.

In contrast, the Oregon and California emigrations were not centrally coordinated and organized, and emigrants chose among many destinations. Travel was loosely organized at the individual, family, and larger group levels. Membership and leadership in emigrating companies were highly fluid, and ultimate decision-making authority was retained by individual emigrants. Travelers kept records of their journeys as they saw fit, and those records that still exist today are dispersed among emigrants' descendants, private collections, and archival repositories across the country.

For this study, volunteers, paid consultants, and NPS staff consulted many sources in gathering information about the use of study routes by emigrants to California and the Oregon Country. These sources include publicly available journals and such key references as historian John Unruh's classic overland trails history, *The Plains Across*; Merrill Mattes's *The Great Platte River Road*, a history of the trail along the Platte River corridor, and his *Platte River Road Narratives*, an annotated bibliography of original trail writings; Louise Barry's *The Beginning of the West*, a chronological compilation of trail-related snippets from newspapers, military reports and dispatches, and other public sources of news related to 19th-century Kansas; and Will Bagley's modern syntheses, *So Rugged and Mountainous: Blazing the Trails to Oregon and California, 1812–1848* and *With Golden Visions Bright Before Them: Trails to the Mining West, 1849–1852*.

When the number of travelers on a route could be reasonably determined based on descriptions in journals or other accounts, as sometimes was the case for routes that experienced limited but well-documented use, those numbers were used to estimate the volume of traffic on the route. Otherwise, where possible, traffic volume was estimated based on the number of emigration records compiled by Mattes in *Platte River Road Narratives* (1988), the Oregon-California Trails Association's (OCTA) Census of Overland Emigrant Documents (COED), and/or other relevant data sources.

Mattes's *Platte River Road Narratives* is one of two primary compilations of emigrant- and route-specific data that were available as this study was in development. His work abstracts information from 2,082 historical records, including emigrant journals, reminiscences, and letters; missionary, exploratory, engineering, and military reports; and 19th-century newspaper articles concerning pre-transcontinental railroad emigration, gathered from more than 90 major repositories and several private collections. (The volume also includes some Mormon accounts, but Mattes did not have access to many LDS materials when he conducted his research in the 1980s.) Mattes also provides a 16-page index, keyed for individual emigrants' year of travel, places of departure and arrival, and the location at which they crossed the Missouri River. *Platte River Road Narratives* is an excellent resource for helping document and evaluate use of the Missouri River routes by Oregon and California emigrants.

## Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes

The second key source of specific emigration data was OCTA's COED database, which comprises information compiled from some 3,700 emigrant journals, letters, reminiscences, and autobiographies.<sup>1</sup> (Many of these are included in Mattes's 1988 *Narratives*.) To help determine whether emigrants used a particular study route on the Oregon or California Trail and to help estimate the volume of traffic on that route, an OCTA volunteer queried the database for the primary and alternate names of jumping-off places, destinations, travel routes, and distinctive sites and landmarks that could be linked to specific routes traveled. Results were reviewed, validated, and tallied by NPS personnel.

Complications encountered in the COED queries stem from the fact that some study routes were not historically named by emigrants and were not associated with key landmarks mentioned in travelers' accounts; that the same name was used historically for multiple routes or landmarks; that a particular route or landmark was called by many different names; and that emigrant journal writers simply did not bother to identify by name or description which of several available short alternates or stream crossings they used, as they did not consider the information important for posterity. Therefore, the COED search protocol is most likely to identify references to long routes with unique landmarks and named river crossings. It is less likely to identify short routes that did not have distinctive, well-known names and that lack identifying landmarks.

Further, not every emigrant kept a journal or diary; in fact, Mattes (1988:xiv) estimates that only "about one out of every 250 [travelers] left some kind of meaningful written record" of their overland experience. To examine the accuracy of Mattes's estimated ratio of 250 travelers per record, consider Table C-1, which lists the estimated number of travelers on the trail each year between 1840 and 1860 (Unruh 1979); the corresponding annual number of trail-related records (including nonemigrant documents) compiled by Mattes; and the resulting number of travelers per trail record across that 20-year span.

Based on his own careful analyses, Unruh estimates that a total of 253,397 emigrants traveled to Oregon and California between 1840 and 1860. Mattes identifies a total of 1,757 contemporaneous records for that timespan, from all sources and for all western destinations (Utah, Montana, Idaho, Nevada, etc.). The generalized ratio based on these numbers is 144.2 emigrants per record across the 20-year span, considerably lower than the 250 travelers per record estimated by Mattes. However, these data indicate that the year-by-year ratios generally trend higher as the emigration progresses. From 1840 through 1849 there averaged about 61 travelers for each written record, and between 1850 and 1860 there averaged approximately 192.5 travelers per record. The latter number still is significantly lower than Mattes's estimate, but the ratio increases if nonemigrant records such as newspaper, military, commercial, missionary, and exploration reports, as well as records by emigrants bound for destinations other than Oregon or California (including the eastern slopes of the Sierra Nevada), are eliminated from his counts.

**Table C-1. Traveler to Records Ratio**

Year	Est. Travelers	Records	Ratio
1840	13	5	2.6:1
1841	58	12	4.8:1
1842	125	8	15.6:1
1843	913	28	32.6:1
1844	1,528	20	76.4:1

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<sup>1</sup> The COED database has been reorganized as Paper Trail: A Guide to Overland Pioneer Names & Documents. It is available for document searches at <http://www.paper-trail.org/>.

Year	Est. Travelers	Records	Ratio
1845	2,760	38	72.6:1
1846	2,700	49	55.1:1
1847	4,450	80	55.6:1
1848	1,700	33	51.5:1
1849	25,450	374	68.0:1
1850	50,000	337	148.4:1
1851	4,700	61	77.0:1
1852	60,000	240	250.0:1
1853	27,500	122	225.4:1
1854	18,000	58	310.3:1
1855	2,000	23	87.0:1
1856	9,000	47	191.5:1
1857	5,500	38	144.7:1
1858	7,500	26	288.5:1
1859	19,000	98	193.9:1
1860	10,500	60	175.0:1
Totals	253,397	1,757	144.2:1

Mattes (1988) lists 1,333 documents that NPS staff could identify as accounts by emigrants bound for Oregon, California, or Utah (as non-Mormons, since the Mormon emigration is more thoroughly addressed by the LDS Church History pioneer database) between 1840 and 1860. Based on Unruh's total 20-year Oregon-California emigration of 253,397 persons for those years, there averaged 190.1 emigrants per record across the 20-year span. The ratio no doubt was greater post-1860, as by then the trails were well established and the emigration was no longer a true pioneer adventure, therefore fewer people kept diaries and journals.

Nevertheless, the most comprehensive, systematically consolidated trail data available suggests that Mattes's 250 emigrants per record is a generous estimate, particularly for trails developed in the first decade of the overland emigration, and that his ratio is more likely to overestimate than underestimate the volumes of traffic on each Oregon and California study route. Therefore, in this study, Mattes's ratio is used in estimating the volume of traffic on a given study route except when more conclusive data are available. Traffic is estimated by multiplying the known number of trail records (combined records from Mattes, the COED database, and other sources) associated with each route by 250 emigrants. This calculation, though a blunt tool, takes the available data into account and helps in evaluating whether a given study route figured meaningfully in the overland emigration to Oregon and California.

The interpretation of the resulting numbers is not necessarily straightforward, though. Bear in mind that the California emigration numbers were nearly four times those of the Oregon emigration. For the years 1840 through 1860, Unruh estimates the total Oregon emigration at 53,062 and the California emigration at 200,335. The total Mormon overland emigration is typically estimated by LDS Church-affiliated researchers at around 65,000. Therefore, a COED search that yields a seemingly low count for Oregon-bound emigrants or Mormon users of a particular route could indicate meaningful use of that route for those emigrations, whereas the same or greater number of California-bound travelers would indicate moderate or low use for that emigration. The NPS planning team took that into consideration

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

when evaluating relative use of the routes, ultimately using the traffic estimates to judge whether use of a route by emigrants to reach Oregon, California, or Utah was better than incidental.

### **THE STUDY ROUTES**

The study routes and historical summaries provided here are organized broadly geographically, beginning on the Missouri River at the Independence and Kansas City jumping-off towns and moving up the river into Nebraska, then taking in the Iowa routes, and then moving west. To go directly to a specific study route description, see the Table of Contents of this appendix. Please see the mapbook at the end of this document for the location of the individual study routes and their relationships to each other and the four designated national historic trails.

**1. Blue Mills-Independence Road (also called Lower Independence Landing Road).** This was a 6.5-mile wagon road between the Missouri River and downtown Independence, Missouri. Already part of the Santa Fe National Historic Trail, the route is under consideration here for addition to the California, Oregon, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails.

**Route Description:** The Blue Mills-Independence Road study route starts in River Bluffs Nature Preserve, a few miles northeast of Independence, Missouri, at the original location of the Lower Independence/Blue Mills Landing. Because the channel has shifted, however, the landing site is no longer on the south bank of the Missouri River. Rather, it is on dry land a quarter-mile north of Courtney Road, a short distance from the confluence of the river and Mill Creek, on land owned by the Jackson County parks department. From there the route goes south toward US 24, then swings southwesterly and follows the highway corridor for about 2 miles. There the highway turns west, but the trail continues southwest. About a quarter-mile north of Independence Courthouse Square, it joins the alternate route of the wagon road from the Upper Independence/Wayne City Landing. The combined wagon road continues south and ends at Courthouse Square in downtown Independence.

**Historical Assets:** Independence retains scattered physical remnants of features that existed during the emigration period. Independence Courthouse Square is significantly altered from its historic appearance but continues to draw visitors because of its historical significance as trailhead of the Oregon, California, and Santa Fe trails and because of Civil War–related events that occurred there. The site of Blue Mills (but not the landing or associated landing road) is listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its significance “in conjunction with travelers, traders and settlers along the Santa Fe Trail” (Ensore 1994:1). Today, railroad tracks cross the Blue Mills Landing site, and no trace remains of the original landing.

**Historical Summary:** The Blue Mills-Independence Road steamboat landing (originally called Owens Landing) is best known for its eminent role in the Santa Fe trade. Many riverboats carrying “countless tons of trade goods bound for Santa Fe” unloaded their goods here to be carried overland to Independence, Missouri, an eastern outfitting point on the Santa Fe Trail (NPS 1990:91). Products from Blue Mills, a complex of grist and lumber mills located on Missouri’s Little Blue River several miles from the landing, also were loaded at the landing for shipment upriver to St. Joseph, Fort Leavenworth, St. Louis, and other destinations.

The Blue Mills-Independence Road linked the landing to the town of Independence. When the Oregon and California emigrations began in the 1840s, travelers could disembark from a ferry or riverboat here and follow the Blue Mills-Independence Road into Independence to complete their outfitting. A 1994 National Register of Historic Places registration form prepared for the site of the Blue Mills complex states, “A description of the scene at Blue Mills Landing was provided by a steamboat passenger in 1846 and details seeing a group of Spaniards who were attached to a Santa Fe company, along with their wagons, a group of Mexican Indians, a few French hunters in buckskin, and *a group of Oregon-bound*



*settlers*" [emphasis added] (Enscore 1994). The settlers may have debarked from the ferry there in order to follow the Blue Mills-Independence Road into town, or they may have landed there to conduct business at the nearby grist mill, as some emigrants did. This description is the only contemporaneous evidence the NPS has located that appears to support use of the landing and the landing road by emigrants bound for the far West.

Most emigrants traveling by steamboat evidently bypassed the Blue Mills Landing and continued several miles upstream to come ashore at Independence. The Upper Independence Landing (also called Wayne City Landing) was established before the peak Oregon migration years of 1843–1847 and 1851–1854. Emigrants preferred the upper landing because it was only 3 miles (as opposed to almost 7) from Independence and it seemed less vulnerable to damage caused by seasonal flooding of the Missouri River.

Evans-Hatch & Associates (2004a) allude to emigrant use of the Blue Mills landing (but not specifically the road into Independence) and surmise, without listing supporting citations, that Oregon-bound emigrants traveling in the early 1840s likely would have used it. However, by 1843, the year of the "Great Migration" to Oregon, the superior Upper Independence Landing was available; and by the late 1840s, when the rush to California began, many emigrants were jumping off onto the emigrant trails at competing river towns farther north.

The volume of California- and Oregon-bound traffic that may have landed at Blue Mills to drive the 6-plus miles to Independence appears to have been extremely low to nearly nonexistent. Unruh (1979:87) estimates the total overland emigration for the years 1840 through 1842, when emigrants would have been most likely to disembark at Blue Mills, at 196 persons. That total includes the 1841 Western Emigration Society (some of whom later formed the Bidwell-Bartleson Party), which Unruh counts at 58. The Western Emigration Society, however, jumped off several miles upriver from Independence at Westport (Kansas City) and clearly did not use the Blue Mills-Independence Road. That reduces the pool of potential Oregon- and California-bound users of the Blue Mills-Independence Road between 1840 and 1842 to 138 persons. As no firsthand emigrant accounts found to date verify their use of this route, the actual number likely was much lower and could amount to zero.

A printed OCTA guide to Missouri River landings (OCTA 2000:5) cites two later emigrant journals, those of Virgil Pringle, May 5, 1846, and William H. Glasgow, May 24, 1846, with references to Blue Mills. However, Pringle's 1846 diary shows that his party did not go by river to the lower landing but drove overland across Missouri. They approached the actual Blue Mills site, on Missouri's Little Blue River several miles east of its namesake river landing, by land from the east.<sup>2</sup> After purchasing flour for the trip across the plains, Pringle's party drove 8 miles directly from the mill to Independence (Pringle 1963). Judging from modern maps of the area, it appears likely that their route joined the Blue Mills-Independence Road, and they may have driven about 4 miles of that road into town. Glasgow, on the other hand, did use the landing, but for the purposes of trade on the Santa Fe Trail and not to begin a trip to California or Oregon.

Evans-Hatch (2004a) could not identify by name any emigrants known to have used the Blue Mills-Independence Road. A query of OCTA's COED database identified one other Oregon-bound emigrant (in addition to Pringle) who mentions Blue Mills in his reminiscences: George Washington Hunt (2012), who departed from Independence in 1847. However, Hunt's family did not land at Blue Mills, either. They put ashore downstream from Westport at Lexington, Missouri, because their steamboat was disabled, then drove to Independence and made a side trip to Blue Mills to purchase flour, much as Pringle's party had done (Hunt 2012).

The emigration of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) from the Missouri River to Utah did not begin until 1846, after the Upper Independence Landing had come into popular use. Even then, the first and largest

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<sup>2</sup> Missouri's Blue and Little Blue rivers are on the south side of the Missouri River. They are not associated with the Big and Little Blue rivers that are prominent in emigrant writings about the trail through Kansas.

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

Mormon company through Independence (the “Mississippi Saints”) arrived there by traveling overland from Mississippi. A search of the LDS Church History pioneer database yielded results for three other small Mormon parties that headed west from Independence, but there is no indication that any of them used the Blue Mills/Lower Independence Landing and its associated road. These were the 1852 Thomas Marsden company of 18 emigrants, the 1853 Anthony Ivins company of 16 emigrants, and the 1857 Ephraim K. Hanks Mail Express party of 9 emigrants. The Marsden and Ivins companies did arrive in Independence by Missouri River steamboat but probably disembarked from the Upper Independence Landing. No information is available concerning the Hanks party’s arrival in Independence.

**Conclusion:** In sum, some small number of emigrants to Oregon and California could have landed at Blue Mills and driven to Independence, but the only hard evidence supporting that possibility is a single remark by a steamboat passenger. Only two emigrant documents have been located that mention visiting Blue Mills, and in both cases the emigrants did not land there but traveled overland to the mills, several miles east of the landing, to purchase flour. No known documentation demonstrates Mormon use of the landing or the road. Overall use of this landing road by emigrants bound for Oregon, California, or Utah appears to have been virtually nonexistent. It was a local road developed and primarily used for commerce. The route has little potential for recreation or historical interest related to the California, Oregon, and Utah emigrations.

This route is already part of the Santa Fe National Historic Trail. Designation as part of the Oregon, California, or Mormon Pioneer national historic trails would add 6.5 miles to each of those trails but no new miles to the National Trails System.

**2. Kansas and Missouri Alternates: Mississippi Saints Route from Independence, Missouri, to Fort Laramie, Wyoming.** In 1846, a party of about 85 Latter-day Saints left Mormon Springs, Mississippi, for the Oregon trailhead at Independence, Missouri.<sup>3</sup> From there they traveled along the Independence Road and up the South-side Platte River Corridor to Fort Laramie (in 1846, Fort John). The entire route of the Mississippi Saints is 1,025 miles; however, the Independence Road and South-side Platte River Corridor are already parts of the designated Santa Fe, California, and Oregon national historic trails. The Independence Road is also part of the Santa Fe National Historic Trail as far as the California Trail parting of the ways near Gardner, Kansas. The routes taken by the Mississippi Saints are here under consideration for addition to the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** The Mississippi Saints study route begins at Courthouse Square in downtown Independence, Missouri, and heads south. It continues southwest through today’s Raytown, a suburb of Kansas City. From there the trail goes by the Heart Grove emigrant campground, near the intersection of US 71 and US 50, crosses the Blue River at Red Bridge, and climbs out of the drainage at Kansas City’s Minor Park, where multiple swales score the hillside.

- a. **The Independence Road.** The designated routes of the Oregon and California national historic trails begin at Upper Independence Landing. Because the Mormon emigrants came overland instead of disembarking from the river at the landing, this study route begins at Courthouse Square in Independence, Missouri. It continues across northeastern Kansas to its junction with the South-side Platte River Corridor, on the south side of the Platte opposite Gibbon, Nebraska. This is the westernmost junction of all of the feeder routes from Missouri River jumping-off points south of the Platte River.

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<sup>3</sup> Most of these and other Mormon emigrant-related database results were acquired from <http://www.lds.org/churchhistory/library/pioneercompanysearchresults/1,15792,4017-1-392,00.html>, referred to throughout this document as the LDS Church History pioneer database. This database lists known emigrants by name, but not all Mormon emigration companies kept detailed rosters, and in some cases, rosters are missing. In many instances, the actual company numbers may have exceeded the number of named emigrants reported here.

The Independence Road continues southwesterly to New Santa Fe on the Kansas/Missouri border. There the landscape becomes more rural. The route keeps to the high ground between tributaries of the Big Blue River as it continues toward the Lone Elm emigrant campground, near US 169, to reach an intersection where the Westport and Independence Roads merge. Half a mile farther west, the trail reaches the parting of the Oregon-California and Santa Fe trails at Gardner Junction. This is a major trail junction, where the Independence Road of the Oregon-California Trail turns northwest toward the Wakarusa River while the Santa Fe Trail continues west.

Next the Independence Road goes north into Lawrence, crosses the University of Kansas campus, and heads northwesterly past Big Springs, an emigrant campground. It continues northwesterly to Papin's Ferry, a crossing of the Kansas River located in today's downtown Topeka, and then passes through the communities of Silver Lake, Rossville, and St. Marys, Kansas. After crossing the Red Vermillion River, the route turns northwesterly and continues along ridges to Scott Spring. It crosses Rock Creek, passes near Westmoreland, and heads north to cross the Black Vermillion River about 5 miles southwest of Frankfort, Kansas. It continues northwest to Alcove Spring, which today is a nature and trail preserve, and crosses the Big Blue River. From here the route proceeds to a junction with the St. Joe Road about 3 miles east of Hanover, Kansas.

From the junction of the Independence and St. Joe roads, the Independence Road continues northwest past Hollenberg Pony Express Station State Historic Site and crosses into Nebraska several hundred yards east of the tri-county monument for Washington County, Kansas, and Jefferson and Gage counties in Nebraska. After crossing into Nebraska, the route follows the high ground on the north side of the Little Blue River, working its way toward the Platte River. It crosses Rock Creek at Rock Creek Station State Historical Park and passes northeast of Fairbury, Nebraska. The route continues beyond Hebron through the community of Oak and then through The Narrows, where the trail squeezes between the Little Blue River and a stretch of high, rugged bluffs that were impassable for wagons. After crossing Thirty-Two Mile Creek, the route leaves the Little Blue and heads northwest across high country toward the Platte River, meeting the river across from Gibbon, Nebraska. By this point, the trail strands from all the jumping-off places south of the Platte and Missouri river confluence (the Independence and St. Joe roads, the Fort Leavenworth routes, the Old Fort Kearny Road/Oxbow Trail, the Nebraska City Cutoffs, and the Upper and Lower Plattsmouth Routes) have merged into one central trail along the south side of the Platte River, here called the South-side Platte River Corridor.

- b. South-side Platte River Corridor.** From the junction of the Independence Road and South-side Platte River Corridor, the wagon route turns west to follow the south bank of the Platte past Fort Kearny (which did not exist until 1848, two years after the Mississippi Saints passed through the area) and continues westerly along the river for many miles. Approaching the town of North Platte, Nebraska, the river forks. Now the route follows the south bank of the South Platte River for 22 miles to O'Fallon's Bluff, where visitors can explore wagon swales at a highway rest area. It continues west for another 45 miles along the river, crosses to the north side of the South Platte at the Upper Crossing, and climbs California Hill. The route continues north across the plateau, descends Windlass Hill, and passes through Ash Hollow, once a popular emigrant campground and today a state park.

Here the route turns northwesterly along the south side of the North Platte, continues along the river near the town of Bridgeport, and passes north of the landmarks of Courthouse Rock, Chimney Rock, and Castle Rock. Approaching Gering, the route of the 1846 Mississippi Saints swings west away from the river, staying south of Scotts Bluff, and crosses the Wildcat Hills at Robidoux Pass. It descends once again toward the North Platte, crosses Horse Creek, and gradually rejoins the river approximately 7 miles southeast of Torrington, Wyoming. (After 1851, Mormon companies following the South-side Platte River Corridor would have continued

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

west over Mitchell Pass and then followed the south bank of the North Platte River to join the route coming over Robidoux Pass.) The trail continues northwest along the south side of the river for 30 miles to Fort Laramie, which in 1846 was a fur trade post named Fort John. The study route ends at Fort Laramie National Historic Site. From the fort, the Mississippi Saints joined Brigham Young's 1847 pioneer company and today's Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail, and proceeded to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake in Utah.

**Historical Assets:** Original trail remnants and other places of historical interest are abundant along the length of the Independence Road and South-Side Platte River Corridor. Only a representative few are identified here to characterize the route's high potential for historical interest and related recreational activities.

Independence Courthouse Square is significantly altered from its historic appearance but draws visitors because of its historical significance as a trailhead of the Oregon, California, and Santa Fe trails and because of Civil War-related events that occurred there. Original wagon swale occurs in several Kansas City-area public parks. Faint wagon swale runs through a cemetery at New Santa Fe, and the site of the Lone Elm emigrant campground, part of a park maintained by the city of Olathe, Kansas, and interpreted by NPS wayside exhibits, is located about 3 miles south of Olathe. Trail swale and a Daughters of the American Revolution historic marker, both listed on the National Register, are located at Lone Elm, as well. The trail junction where Oregon- and California-bound traffic split away from the Santa Fe Trail is interpreted at a roadside park near Gardner, Kansas. Original trail remnants exist at one of the two Upper Bluejacket Crossing sites, located on private land along the Wakarusa River between Eudora and Lawrence, and three more trail remnants are found near Tecumseh, Kansas. Another privately owned National Register site near Lawrence, the Upper Wakarusa River Crossing, includes two intact "cutdowns," or earthen ramps, used by wagons fording the river. In the vicinity of Westmoreland, Kansas, lies Scott Spring, a privately owned, National Register-listed site that includes a water source used by emigrants and a separate area of intact wagon ruts; nearby are a related emigrant camping area (now a county park) and an emigrant-era grave. The emigrant campsite at Alcove Spring, north of Blue Rapids, today is a privately operated, National Register-listed nature and historic preserve that retains its original setting, emigrant inscriptions, unmarked emigrant graves, and two sets of intact wagon ruts. Rock Creek Station, now a Nebraska state park that focuses on Pony Express history, also includes historic trail ruts. Another segment of wagon ruts is found in the vicinity of Ayr, Nebraska.

Visitors can experience a section of interpreted, original trail at the O'Fallon's Bluff rest stop off I-80, about 2 miles southeast of Sutherland, Nebraska. A long stretch of multiple ruts is visible at California Hill, and more trail remnants are found on the opposite side of the ridge at Windlass Hill. Ash Hollow, an emigrant campground with trail remnants, is now a Nebraska state park with a small museum and on-site interpretation. Courthouse Rock, Castle Rock, and Jail Rock are publicly accessible; Chimney Rock National Historic Site offers trail interpretation, public programs, and a visitor center. Scott's Bluff National Monument, a unit of the NPS, has a visitor center, trail remnants, and hiking trails with overlooks and historic interpretation. In the vicinity of Robidoux Pass, which is a National Register-listed property, visitors will find original trail remnants and four interpreted emigrant graves; other burials, unmarked, may exist there. All of that property is privately owned but easily accessible along a county road. The site of Fort John is interpreted at Fort Laramie National Historic Site, a unit of the NPS. Fort Laramie itself is a highly significant site in the history of the American West, although it post-dates the 1846 emigration of the Mississippi Saints.

**Historical Summary:** In January 1846, as he prepared to take an advance pioneer company of Latter-day Saints from Nauvoo, Illinois, to a new home in the Great Basin, Brigham Young directed follower John Brown to lead a separate company of Southern converts out of Mississippi. Brown was to gather up church members then residing at Mormon Springs, Mississippi, lead them overland to Independence, Missouri, and then follow the Oregon Trail to the Platte River. Somewhere along the Platte that summer, the Mississippi Saints were to fall in with Young's pioneer company and all would continue west together to their common destination. Accordingly, Brown's company of 14 families arrived in

Independence on May 26, 1846. There they met up with another LDS family from Illinois, and all joined with a small company of Oregon-bound, non-Mormon emigrants for the westward journey (Roberts 1930; Brown 1941:66). The mixed party traveled together along the “Oregon Road” (presumably, the Independence Road), but the Oregon emigrants split off upon reaching the Platte River, having belatedly realized that their traveling companions were Mormons (Brown 1941).<sup>4</sup> The Mississippi Saints continued west on their own, moving along the south bank of the Platte and North Platte rivers into present-day Wyoming.

Meanwhile, however, Young’s “Camp of Israel”—exhausted, ill, and unable to continue west—had stopped to overwinter on the Missouri River at Winter Quarters, in today’s Omaha, Nebraska. Failing to find Young’s company along the trail, the Mississippi Saints turned south to overwinter at Fort Pueblo, in Pueblo, Colorado. The following spring, the Mississippi Saints sent a party of men to Fort John (later to be better known as Fort Laramie) in Wyoming to wait for the Nauvoo Mormons to arrive. Brigham Young’s 1847 advance company met them at Fort John on June 1. Three of the Mississippi Saints returned to Pueblo to bring up the rest of their company while the others continued with Young’s party to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake (Roberts 1930; Berrett and Anderson 2007; Utah State Office of Education et al. 2012).

In the LDS Church History pioneer database, three other Mormon parties (the 1852 Thomas Marsden party of 18 emigrants, the 1853 Anthony Ivins company of 16 emigrants, and the 1857 Ephraim K. Hanks Mail Express party of 9 emigrants, totaling 43 members) are shown as having departed from Independence in subsequent years. The two brief, online excerpts from the writings of the Marsden and Ivins companies (available on the LDS Church History pioneer database) give no indication of the route traveled between Independence and Salt Lake City. Those emigrants are here presumed to have followed the Independence Road, since the alternative “Mormon Road” off the Santa Fe Trail and through Fort Riley evidently did not open until 1854 and the improved Fort Riley-to-Fort Kearny military road did not open until 1857 (Jackson 1949, 1952).<sup>5</sup> The 1857 Mormon mail party likewise could have chosen the Independence Road, but Hanks might have used other alternatives that by then existed. In any case, for the purposes of this study, up to 43 documented Mormon emigrants potentially traveled the Independence Road between 1852 and 1857.

In addition, the South-side Platte River Corridor served thousands of Mormon emigrants whose companies jumped off from Plattsmouth, the town of Wyoming, and other Nebraska river towns situated south of the Platte/Missouri river confluence. Church historian Melvin Bashore believes a number of additional Mormon families traveling independently may have migrated through Independence as well (personal communication, 3/23/2012).

**Conclusion:** In sum, about 85 Mississippi Saints (and likely fewer than 100 later Mormon emigrants) used the Independence Road and the South-side Platte River Corridor between Independence and Fort John/Fort Laramie in 1846–1847. Although they did not depart Nauvoo with Brigham Young, the Mississippi Saints were part of the earliest vanguard exodus to the Great Basin in 1846, and they arrived at Fort John/Fort Laramie nearly a year ahead of Brigham Young’s own pioneer company. Their route figured in the first movement that established Mormon settlement of the Great Basin. Another 43 Mormon emigrants are known to have departed from Independence between 1852 and 1857, and most or all of them probably used the Independence Road. Thousands of later LDS emigrants traveled the South-side Platte River Corridor, part of the route followed by the Mississippi Saints, on their way to Utah. There are many highly significant, trail-related places of recreational and historical interest along this route.

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<sup>4</sup> John Brown’s autobiography states only that the company left Independence on the “Oregon Road.” It does not specify whether they took the Blue Ridge Cutoff or the original route out of Independence.

<sup>5</sup> The Mormon Road, at present only partially documented, branched off the Santa Fe Trail at 110-Mile Creek and turned north through Fort Riley, and continued generally northwesterly from there to the Platte River trail corridor at or near Fort Kearny.

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

Designation of this route would expand the designated Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail by 1,025 miles. However, that designation would add no new miles to the National Trails System because the route traveled by the Mississippi Saints is already part of the California and Oregon national historic trails.

**3. Blue Ridge Cutoff.** This cutoff was an 8-mile alternate route between historic downtown Independence and modern-day Raytown, Missouri, a suburb of Kansas City. It is under consideration for addition to the California, Oregon, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails.

**Route Description:** The Blue Ridge Cutoff study route begins at Independence Courthouse Square and goes west along today's Lexington Avenue, which overlies the old trail, to the vicinity of Chrysler Road. It next cuts southwest across Rock Creek and meets today's Westport Road near the Rockwood Country Club. (This initial section of the route is also part of the historic Independence-Westport Road.) There the study route turns south. Westport Road becomes an arterial named Blue Ridge Cutoff, which follows the original trail corridor south across US 40 to the historic Rice-Tremonti Farm at 66th Street in Raytown, Missouri. In the vicinity of 66th Street and Blue Ridge Boulevard, the historic Blue Ridge Cutoff wagon road rejoins the main Independence Road. The study route terminates at that junction.

**Historical Assets:** Today the route of the Blue Ridge Cutoff winds through residential neighborhoods that retain few traces of the old wagon trail. Some of the modern road is built atop the original trail, and its alignment may convey to visitors an understanding of how trails followed the high ground between drainages. Independence Courthouse Square itself is significantly altered from its historic appearance, but it continues to draw visitors because of its historical significance as trailhead of the Oregon, California, and Santa Fe trails and for Civil War-related events that occurred there. Historic Rice-Tremonti House, part of a farm established in 1844, was a trailside landmark during the emigration era. It stands in a 5-acre, park-like setting in Raytown, Missouri, and is operated as a museum.

**Historical Summary:** Little information has come to light concerning historical development of the Blue Ridge Cutoff, but it is presumed to have provided an alternate route for both emigration and Santa Fe freight traffic departing Independence.

Evans-Hatch (2004a) report that many Oregon-bound emigrants used this route, but they cite none by name; and they report that California-bound emigrants used the Blue Ridge Cutoff, citing one. A query of OCTA's COED database on the term "Blue Ridge" yielded no results, probably because most emigrants did not know the route names or did not bother to write down precisely which of the roads they used to depart Independence.

The LDS Church History pioneer database shows that four Mormon parties totaling around 128 emigrants (the 1846 Mississippi Saints company of about 85 emigrants, the 1852 Thomas Marsden party of 18 emigrants, the 1853 Anthony Ivins company of 16 emigrants, and the 1857 Ephraim K. Hanks Mail Express party of 9 emigrants) departed from Independence, but the NPS has located no documentation to indicate which road they followed out of town.<sup>6</sup>

**Conclusion:** In sum, both Oregon- and California-bound emigrants probably used the Blue Ridge Cutoff, but due to emigrants' failure to name their precise route out of Independence, it is difficult to gauge the level of emigrant traffic on this road. Documented Mormon use of this route and/or other routes through the vicinity was very low, around 128 persons, and perhaps nonexistent for this particular study route. Trail-related places of historical interest are Independence Courthouse Square and Rice-Tremonti House. No trail remnants on this route are extant; modern roads and developments occupy the route of the original trail.

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<sup>6</sup>The Ivins company evidently was an "independent" company, one not formally organized by the LDS Church.

Designation of the Blue Ridge Cutoff as part of the Oregon, California, or Mormon Pioneer national historic trails would add 8 new miles to each of those NHTs and to the National Trails System.

**4. Westport Landing Road.** This road carried traffic about 4.5 miles from the Missouri River to the frontier trade center of Westport, which today is a historic neighborhood in Kansas City, Missouri. Already part of the Santa Fe National Historic Trail, the Westport Landing Road is under consideration for addition to the California, Oregon, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails.

**Route Description:** The Westport Landing Road study route begins at the historic location of Westport Landing in the heart of Kansas City, Missouri. The site is on the south bank of the Missouri River between Grand Boulevard and Delaware Street, west of the MO-9 bridge. From there the Westport Landing route goes south, more or less along the alignment of today's Grand Avenue. It jogs southwest through Penn Valley Park and continues south along Broadway. The study route ends at Westport's Pioneer Park, located at Broadway and Westport Road. The historic wagon road ended in that vicinity, though not necessarily at that precise spot.

**Historical Assets:** The Westport Landing locale today is city-owned Riverfront Park, which has a public trail, nine interpretive wayside exhibits, and a viewing structure called the Main Street Bridge that extends over the south bank of the river. The rock landing and associated ruins, part of the Town of Kansas Archaeological Site, can be seen along the riverside. At the other end of the trail route, the busy commercial neighborhood of Westport retains some historic buildings of the emigrant era, most notably the Albert Gallatin Boone Store (now a tavern). The Boone Store was originally constructed in 1848–1854 and is associated with the western trade on the Santa Fe and Oregon trails. One of the oldest buildings in Kansas City, it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Mountain man Jim Bridger owned the adjacent building, built in 1850–1851. Nearby Pioneer Park offers interpretive exhibits about historic Westport.

**Historical Summary:** In 1834, John Calvin McCoy began unloading riverboat cargo at a rocky ledge along the Missouri River in order to haul the goods several miles south to his trading post. The ledge, located between Delaware Street and Grand Boulevard at the riverfront of present-day Kansas City, Missouri, became known as “West Port Landing” and the area of the store as “West Port.” The wagon track between them, for the purposes of this study, is the Westport Landing Road. In 1839, McCoy and other area businessmen established a 15-acre town site around Westport Landing, which they called the “Town of Kansas” (later, City of Kansas, which finally became Kansas City) (McCandless 1972:133). Westport/Kansas became an outfitting point for the Santa Fe trade in 1844, and by 1845 “the tandem of Kansas City and Westport were fairly dividing the [Santa Fe] trade with Independence” (Brown 1988:84).

The road from the landing also carried thousands of Oregon- and California-bound emigrants into the outfitting center of Westport in the 1840s and early 1850s. According to Mattes (1969:109–110), the wagon road out of Westport (and by extension, the landing road) “became the main emigrant road westward” after 1846 and “played a considerable role” during the California gold rush. However, in 1849 a cholera epidemic in the area discouraged riverboat landings at Westport, and more travelers began jumping off, instead, at more northern departure points. Mattes (1969:104) writes that St. Joseph became the primary point of departure that year. In 1850, emigrant traffic through Kansas City/Westport continued to decline, and by 1852, Council Bluffs, Iowa, was the primary point of departure for emigrants heading west.

Numerous emigrant journals document use of the Westport Landing Road by California- and Oregon-bound emigrants (Barry 1972; Mattes 1988; Evans-Hatch 2004a). Parkman (1931), in his popular account, *The Oregon Trail*, described Westport as he saw it in 1846, when he traveled between the river

## Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes

and the town via the Westport Landing Road.<sup>7</sup> At least a few members of the 1841 Western Emigration Society (including those who would form the Bidwell-Bartleson Party, the first overland emigrants to California) disembarked from the river at Westport Landing, outfitted at Westport, and used the landing road on their way to Sapling Grove. James John (1991), who traveled with the Western Emigration Society, wrote in his diary that he departed from Westport with two other emigrants. He did not specify by name the route he had used to reach town.

A query of OCTA's COED database identified mentions of Westport by 9 Oregon-bound emigrants (1841–1852) and 27 California-bound emigrants (1841–1852). Because emigrants did not list the routes they followed using modern study route names, when they named them at all, and because there are no unique landmarks to distinguish various Westport alternates (Westport Landing Road, Westport Road, and Westport-Lawrence Road), the data search results are not attributable to individual Westport alternates. However, it is reasonable to conclude that many emigrants who outfitted at Westport had arrived there by river, come ashore at the landing, and followed the landing road into Westport.

In 1854, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints established staging camps at Westport, where emigrants could purchase equipment and supplies for the overland march to Utah (Andersen 2009a). Church leaders were uncertain how their people would be received there, given the troubles the Latter-day Saints had experienced in Jackson County and elsewhere in Missouri during the 1830s. Nonetheless, in the spring of that year, several thousand British and Scandinavian Mormon converts stepped off riverboats at Westport Landing. Presumably, they followed the landing road 4 miles south to their staging ground (Andersen 2009a; see also LDS Church History pioneer database). Their orderly encampments were noted by passers-by and reported in area newspapers (Barry 1972:1220–1223). Woods (2010) cites the journals and correspondence of more than 20 emigrants and company organizers who were among the approximately 3,200 Mormons that outfitted at Westport in 1854 (total provided by R. Andersen, personal communication, 2012). Interestingly, Barry (1972:1221–1222) and Andersen (2009b) note that one of the LDS Danish companies that outfitted at Westport that year lost a cow to a Lakota encampment near Fort Laramie, triggering a fight between warriors and US soldiers (the “Grattan Massacre” of August 19, 1854) and ultimately destroying the shaky peace along the emigrant trails. Some historians attribute the decline of overland emigration traffic after 1854 to fear of Indian attack stemming from that incident.

**Conclusion:** In sum, use of the Westport Landing and the road from the river to Westport by emigrants to California and Oregon is well documented, and traffic probably amounted to at least several thousand travelers for both emigrations. The COED query results suggest a maximum estimate of 2,250 emigrants for Oregon and 6,750 emigrants for California split among all of the Westport routes, but most of these emigrants probably used the Westport Landing Road. Several members of the first overland emigrant party to the West Coast in 1841 disembarked here. Use of the road by about 3,200 Mormon emigrants likewise is well documented and is linked to a significant event, the “Grattan Massacre,” in the history of the overland trails. There are numerous trail-related places of historical interest to trail visitors along the route.

This route is already part of the Santa Fe National Historic Trail. Designation as part of the Oregon, California, or Mormon Pioneer national historic trails would add 4.5 miles to each of those NHTs but no new miles to the National Trails System.

**5. Westport Road.** The Westport Road (as defined by this study) carried emigrants and Santa Fe-bound freight about 37 miles from Westport, at Kansas City, Missouri, to the vicinity of present-day

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<sup>7</sup> Parkman's account was originally published as a 21-part series in *Knickerbocker's Magazine* in 1847–1849 and was reissued as a book, *The California and Oregon Trail*, in 1849. It has been revised several times since then and is still popular more than 160 years later. Parkman traveled west just beyond Fort Laramie before he turned back due to illness. He did not actually reach Oregon.



Gardner, Kansas, where wagons bound for Santa Fe parted ways with those bound for Oregon and California. Already part of the Santa Fe National Historic Trail, the Westport Road is under consideration for addition to the California, Oregon, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails.

**Route Description:** The Westport Road study route comprises a northern branch and a southern branch. These diverge at the route's starting point at Westport's Pioneer Park and rejoin at Overland Park, Kansas, near West 87th and Farley streets in Strang Park. From Overland Park, the route continues about 2 miles beyond Gardner, Kansas, to its junction with the Independence Road.

The route's southern branch, which coincides with the Westport variant of the Santa Fe Trail, begins at Pioneer Park, at Broadway and Westport Road, and meanders southerly on and near Wornall Road. At Wornall Road and 66th Street, the route jogs southwest through Prairie Village, Kansas, and continues southwest to Overland Park, where it joins the northern branch of the Westport Road study route.

The northern branch starts southwest from Pioneer Park, generally following Westport Road to the state line. It continues through Roeland Park and Mission, Kansas, and passes near the Methodist, Baptist, and Quaker missions to the Shawnee Indians. From the town of Mission, the route continues in a southerly direction through the emigrant campground of Sapling Grove to Overland Park. It joins the southern branch just west of today's Strang Park, located at 88th Terrace and Farley Street in Overland Park.

From that junction of the two branches, the Westport Road study route continues southwest, paralleling the alignment of modern-day I-35 along the south side of the freeway. The route crosses I-35 about 2 miles northeast of Olathe, Kansas, and continues southwest to Elm Grove campground. It passes through the New Century AirCenter before joining the old Independence Road half a mile east of Gardner Junction, where the Oregon and California trails split away from the Santa Fe Trail. The study route ends at that junction.

**Historical Assets:** The busy commercial neighborhood of Westport retains some historic buildings of the emigrant era, most notably the Albert Gallatin Boone Store (now a tavern). The Boone Store was originally constructed in 1848–1854 and is associated with the western trade on the Santa Fe and Oregon trails. It is one of the oldest buildings in Kansas City and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Mountain man Jim Bridger owned the adjacent building, built in 1850–1851. Pioneer Park offers interpretive exhibits about historic Westport. At Harmon Park, the Prairie Village Ruts are a fine example of an intact wagon trail. Shawnee Methodist Mission, in Fairway, Kansas, retains several original, mid-19th-century buildings in a 12-acre state historic park. The mission was mentioned in 1840s diaries and was a popular camping spot for emigrants. Sapling Grove campground in Overland Park, Kansas, today is part of a neighborhood park with wayside exhibits that interpret the site, but no remains of the campground are visible. From a bridge over Flat Rock Creek, today's visitors can see the "flat rocks" for which the stream and its wagon ford were named. The trail junction where Oregon- and California-bound traffic split away from the Santa Fe Trail is interpreted at a roadside park 2 miles southwest of Gardner, Kansas, and an intact wagon swale in the southwest portion of Olathe is also interpreted for the public.

**Historical Summary:** Westport Road likely was established in the late 1830s as Westport businessmen became engaged in the Santa Fe trade. It certainly existed by 1841, when members of the Western Emigration Society used it to rendezvous at Sapling Grove campground, a short distance outside of Westport. From there these emigrants, the first to set out overland for California, took the Westport Road southwest to its junction with the Independence Road near Gardner, Kansas. More emigrants bound for Oregon or California soon followed, and after 1846 the road out of Westport "became the main emigration route westward" from the combined Independence and Kansas City area (Mattes 1969:109). Westport saw considerable emigrant traffic in 1849, but a cholera outbreak that year discouraged many from debarking there. By 1852, Westport had "yielded to towns upriver as primary jumping-off places for the Platte" (Mattes 1969:110). The Westport Road continued to carry traffic bound for other western destinations, however; for example, an 1859 Kansas Territorial Map labels it as part of the "South Route to Pikes Peak."

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Many Oregon- and California-bound travelers documented their use of the Westport Road in diaries and journals. Evans-Hatch (2004a) cite the journals of 18 California emigrants, not including those of the Western Emigration Society/Bidwell-Bartleson Party, as well as the journals of four Oregon emigrants who mention the route by name or by landmark. Barry (e.g., 1972:476) provides numerous entries concerning emigrant use of the Westport Road/Santa Fe Trail, primarily because diarists named well-known sites and campgrounds along the route. Mattes (1988:617) combines departures from Westport Landing along with those from Westport, Independence, and four other Kansas City–area Missouri River crossings, so his data were not reviewed for the purpose of estimating emigrant traffic specifically on the Westport Road.

A query of OCTA's COED database identified mentions of Westport by 9 Oregon-bound emigrants (1841–1852) and 27 California-bound emigrants (1842–1852). The query was unable to distinguish between the landing road and the two routes out of Westport, so the resulting number does not reflect the level of use attributable to this particular road.

Employing Mattes's (1988:xiv) rule-of-thumb ratio of 250 emigrants per contemporaneous written record, the 18 California and 4 Oregon records cited by Evans-Hatch represent approximately 4,500 California-bound emigrants and 1,000 Oregon-bound emigrants known to have traveled the Westport Road. Further based on that ratio, the COED query results suggest that all of the Westport routes combined were likely traveled by up to 6,750 California-bound emigrants and 2,250 Oregon-bound emigrants. Because the COED query was unable to distinguish among the various routes out of Westport, that volume of traffic would have been dispersed, not necessarily evenly, among the various routes out of Westport, and cannot be wholly attributed to this specific route.

In addition, Mormon historian Fred Woods (2010) cites the journals and correspondence of more than 20 emigrants and organizers who were among the Mormon companies that outfitted near Westport in 1854. That year approximately 3,200 British and Scandinavian converts, organized into 10 emigrant companies, gathered at the LDS Church staging grounds near the town (R. Andersen, personal communication, 2012). Those from Britain, instead of jumping off via the Westport Road, then traveled north to join up with companies of American Latter-day Saints who were gathering at the Salt Creek campground near Fort Leavenworth (Woods 2010:241). Journals, autobiographical sketches, and other writings indicate that the 1854 Hans Peter Olsen company of Scandinavian emigrants, who also outfitted at Westport that season, beat a new track north through heavy prairie grass to reach Fort Leavenworth (see the excerpted writings of Christian Frederick Nielsen Twede [2012] and Christian John Larsen [2012] at the LDS Church History pioneer database website). The NPS was unable to ascertain from these writings whether any of the 1854 Mormon companies that outfitted at Westport followed the Westport Road to reach the Independence Road, but it seems likely that at least some did.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Woods's statement that only the British companies went north to Leavenworth implies that the Scandinavian companies departed by some other route, presumably the Westport Road. The Olsen Company writings indicate that some or all of the Scandinavian companies, too, went through Leavenworth. However, Kansas trails researcher Morris Werner (1988a) writes that "the Westport contingent"—he does not differentiate between the British and the Scandinavian companies—actually did go west on the Santa Fe Trail, which shares its corridor with the Westport Road as far as Gardner, Kansas. At Gardner Junction, the Oregon and California trail corridor splits away from the Santa Fe Trail; however, these Mormon emigrants stayed on the Santa Fe Trail to 110-Mile Creek, east of today's Burlingame and south of Topeka. There, Werner believes, they turned north and broke a new wagon trail through tall prairie grass to Fort Riley (under construction between 1853 and 1855—see Jackson 1964:121) in central Kansas. From Fort Riley, they would have bushwhacked northwesterly across the prairie into Nebraska to meet the Oregon and California Trail near Fort Kearny. This new track from Fort Riley to the Platte River, which became locally known as the "Mormon Road," was noted on Kansas territorial surveys of 1857–1860 through Riley and Washington counties (Werner 1988b). Corroborating evidence is provided by historian Louise Barry (1972:1222), who reports a June 30, 1854, account stating that some of the Mormon companies "go out by Fort Riley and open up a new road to Laramie." This, she suggests, "well may be the clue to the origin of the 'Mormon trail' which diverged

**Conclusion:** In sum, use of the Westport Road appears to have amounted to between 4,500 and 6,750 California-bound emigrants and 1,000 to 2,250 Oregon emigrants. (COED query results for “Westport” suggest a total of 2,250 Oregon emigrants and 6,750 California emigrants across all of the Westport routes combined.) Among these travelers were members of the 1841 Western Emigration Society/Bidwell-Bartleson Party, the first overland covered wagon pioneers to California. Approximately 3,200 Mormon emigrants in 1854 outfitted at Westport, but the NPS has been unable to determine how many, if any, departed via the Westport Road. In addition to the 1854 Mormon parties, LDS Church historian Melvin Bashore believes an unknown number of independent Mormon families may have jumped off at Westport (M. Bashore, personal communication, 3/23/2012); however, if this is the case, their routes of travel beyond Westport have not been determined. Places of historical and recreational interest along the Westport Road study route include original trail remnants, historic buildings, and emigrant campground sites.

The Westport Road is part of the designated Santa Fe National Historic Trail. Designation to the Oregon, California, or Mormon Pioneer national historic trails would add approximately 29 miles to each of those national historic trails and 8 new miles to the National Trails System.

**6. The Westport-Lawrence Road.** This 34.5-mile wagon road carried traffic from Westport, Missouri, to the Wakarusa River southwest of Eudora, Kansas, where it joined the old Independence Road. The Westport-Lawrence Road is under consideration for addition to the California, Oregon, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails.

**Route Description:** From Pioneer Park in Westport, the Westport-Lawrence Road study route follows the northern branch of the Westport Road study route (described above) for 4 miles to Mission, Kansas. There the Westport-Lawrence Road splits away from the Westport Road and heads west past today’s Merriam, Kansas, to the vicinity of Gum Springs (a water source on Shawnee Indian lands, now at the town of Shawnee). The route continues west, paralleling Shawnee Mission Parkway, to Mill Creek, then goes through Monticello. It next cuts southwest and crosses KS-7 about a half-mile east of Elmers Lake. It continues over open farmland and woodlands to the junction of West 85th Terrace and Cedar Creek Road. From there the route goes southwest over open country and crosses through the intersection of KS-10 and South Kill Creek Road. The study route jogs west and continues along the south side of KS-10. It passes south of Eudora, Kansas, and joins the Independence Road about 2 miles southwest of Eudora near the Lower Bluejacket Crossing of the Wakarusa River.

**Historical Assets:** Today the route winds through Kansas City suburbs, among small towns, and over rural farmland, where a few swales of the original trail still can be seen. Shawnee Methodist Mission in Fairway, Kansas, retains several original, mid-19th-century buildings in a 12-acre state historic park. The mission is mentioned in many 1840s diaries and was a popular camping spot for emigrants. The

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northwestward (towards Fort Riley) from the Santa Fe road’s 110-Mile Creek crossing—a ‘Mormon trail’ already there when settlers arrived in the mid-1850s.” Albe Whiting (1912), in an address to the Kansas State Historical Society in 1910, likewise spoke of an “old Mormon trail” that “left the Santa Fe trail at 110 Creek” and continued north to the Little Blue River. Kansas historian George Root (1934:41) also mentions “a Mormon Road,” noting that sections of it could then “still be traced past the Geary county poor farm and for some distance beyond.” This route predates and may take a somewhat different alignment from the military road established by Lt. Francis Bryan in 1856–1857 between Fort Riley and Fort Kearny. If Werner and Barry are right, at least some of the Mormon companies outfitting at Westport could have started west along the Santa Fe Trail out of Westport. However, two members of the Hans Peter Olsen Company wrote of breaking trail on their way to Fort Leavenworth. In that case, those emigrants could then have followed the new military road from Leavenworth to Fort Riley.

OCTA volunteers in Kansas, led by Duane Durst, recently have traced and mapped this route across Kansas but not all the way to the Platte River. Because the complete route is not yet known, this “Mormon Road” is not under consideration as part of this feasibility study.

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

Shawnee Baptist and Quaker missions are no longer extant. The site of Gum Springs, in a residential area in Shawnee, Kansas, is interpreted with wayside exhibits.

**Historical Summary:** The Westport-Lawrence Road began in the 1830s as a pack trail used by Shawnee Indians, fur traders, and missionaries traveling between Westport, Missouri, and the western Shawnee settlements on the Wakarusa River. Unlike the roads out of Independence, the Westport routes avoided a crossing of Missouri's Blue River.

This road links Westport to the Independence Road and to a north/south military road that connected Fort Leavenworth, Fort Scott (both in Kansas), and Fort Gibson, Oklahoma. (The military road, completed between Fort Leavenworth and Fort Gibson in 1845 [Barry 1942], includes the Gum Springs-Fort Leavenworth study route.) Historians generally report that both Oregon- and California-bound emigrants used this study route, or at least that it was available for their use (e.g., Barry 1972:903, for 1850), but they do not name or cite individual travelers nor indicate the general volume of traffic on the route. OCTA researcher Ross Marshall has identified two California-bound emigrants, traveling in 1850 and 1851, and an Oregon-bound emigrant, traveling in 1853, who followed the Westport-Lawrence Road to reach the Gum Springs-Fort Leavenworth military road.

Overland traffic on the Westport-Lawrence Road would have been low by 1852, when Council Bluffs became the primary point of departure for the Oregon and California emigration (Mattes 1969:104). Beginning with passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854, the road did carry substantial regional traffic to Lawrence, which had become a center for Kansas abolitionists. Eyewitness accounts of heavy traffic on the road to Lawrence in the 1850s appear to relate to Kansas settlement and territorial politics rather than to the Oregon and California emigration.

Because Mattes (1988:617) combines departures from Westport Landing along with those from Westport, Independence, and four other Kansas City-area Missouri River crossings, the NPS did not review his data for the purpose of estimating emigrant traffic on the Westport Landing Road.

A query of OCTA's COED database identified mentions of Westport by 9 Oregon-bound emigrants (1841–1852) and 27 California-bound emigrants (1842–1852). Based on Mattes's estimate of 250 emigrants per record, all of the Westport routes combined were likely traveled by up to 2,250 Oregon-bound emigrants and 6,750 California-bound emigrants. However, because the COED query was unable to distinguish among the various routes out of Westport, this volume of traffic would have been dispersed, not necessarily evenly, among the various routes out of Westport, and cannot be attributed to this specific route.

**Conclusion:** In sum, documentation exists to suggest some level of use of the Westport-Lawrence Road by emigrants to Oregon and California between 1841 and 1852. Based on COED query results for "Westport," traffic on all the Westport routes combined is estimated at around 2,250 Oregon emigrants and 6,750 California emigrants; traffic on the Westport-Lawrence Road would have been some fraction of those totals. The NPS has identified no documentation of LDS Church-organized emigration along the Westport-Lawrence Road. Several trail-related places of recreational and historical interest to Oregon and California trail visitors occur along this route.

About 4 miles of this 35-mile route are already part of the Santa Fe National Historic Trail. Further designation of the Westport-Lawrence Road would add approximately 30 miles each to the Oregon, California, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails and would expand the National Trails System by the same length.

**7. Gum Springs-Fort Leavenworth Route.** This 29-mile section of a much longer military road linked Gum Springs, at Shawnee, Kansas, to historic Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, on the Missouri River. The route is under consideration for addition to the California, Oregon, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails.

**Route Description:** The Gum Springs-Fort Leavenworth study route branches off the Westport-Lawrence Road at Gum Springs, a historic water source located at Shawnee, Kansas. From there the route follows the old Fort Leavenworth-Fort Scott military road northwest for four and a half miles to Grinter's Ferry (also known as Delaware Crossing) on the Kansas River. Upon crossing the river, it transects I-435 near the Kansas Speedway and continues northwest to cross US 73/KS-7 near the Leavenworth/Wyandotte county line. From there the route goes north, paralleling US 73/KS-7 through today's city of Leavenworth to historic Fort Leavenworth.

**Historical Assets:** Grinter Place, the historic brick home belonging to Moses and Annie Grinter, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is a Kansas State Historic Site. The two-story house stands near the old ferry crossing (Grinter or Delaware Crossing) on the Kansas River east of today's Edwardsville. Flooding has obliterated the original ferry landing. The site of Gum Springs, in a residential area in Shawnee, Kansas, is interpreted with wayside exhibits. Fort Leavenworth National Historic Landmark retains its historic military parade grounds and buildings dating from the emigration era.

**Historical Summary:** Fort Leavenworth (originally, "Cantonment Leavenworth") was established in 1827 to protect the Santa Fe trade (NPS 2012) and served as a base of operations on the Indian frontier. In 1830, the federal government began relocating several eastern tribes to "Indian Territory" in northeastern Kansas, in the vicinity of the fort. Moses Grinter in 1831 began operating the first ferry in Kansas at the Delaware Indian reserve about 22 miles southeast of Fort Leavenworth and four and a half miles northwest of Gum Springs (at Shawnee, Kansas). Grinter's Ferry was the "only dry way to cross the Kansas" (Robbins 1978:94). Grinter initially earned his living transporting Indian passengers and Leavenworth military traffic across the Kansas River, but later, he and his Delaware Indian wife, Annie, also operated a trading post and ferried emigrants over the river. Their historic brick house, Grinter Place, still stands in the Muncie neighborhood of Kansas City.

In 1837, the army began construction of a military road linking Fort Leavenworth and Fort Scott, Kansas, with Fort Gibson, Oklahoma, for patrolling the border of Indian Territory and protecting the relocated tribes and white settlers from each other. Soldiers blazed and placed mileposts along the segment between forts Leavenworth and Scott in 1837, contractors completed construction on that section in 1845, and the Kansas legislature declared it a territorial road in 1855 (Barry 1942; Robbins 1978). This north/south road, variously known as the Fort Leavenworth Military Road, the Military Post Road, and the Fort Scott Military Road, intersected all of the later overland trail variants heading west out of Westport and Independence.<sup>9</sup> Travelers who outfitted at Independence could start west along the Independence Road/Santa Fe Trail toward New Santa Fe, and those who jumped off at Westport could follow, for example, the Westport-Lawrence Road (another feasibility study route) southwest to Gum Springs to intercept and turn north onto the improved military road to Fort Leavenworth. However, going this way was not a viable option for emigrants during the 1840s, as no connecting wagon route then existed to carry traffic from Fort Leavenworth to the St. Joe Road or the Independence Road. Fort Leavenworth would have been a dead end for emigrants bound for Oregon or California during that period. That situation began to change in 1849–1850, first when a rough wagon track was established from Fort Leavenworth west to the St. Joe Road at the Big Blue River near today's town of Marysville, Kansas, and then when the army developed an improved military road along that general route (which is the Fort Leavenworth-Big Blue River feasibility study route) the following year.

The army abandoned Fort Scott and stopped patrolling the road in 1853, following removal of the Indians to reservations in Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Arizona. The next year, Congress established Kansas Territory and left it to the settlers to determine whether Kansas would enter the Union as a free state or a slave state. With that, the military road connecting Fort Leavenworth and Fort Scott, now known as the Old Post Road, became "the funnel for immigration into eastern Kansas" as partisans began flooding into the new territory to vote on the slavery issue (Robbins 1978:99). The border towns

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<sup>9</sup>Today, highway US 69 between Kansas City and Baxter Springs approximates the old military road.

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

of Westport, Atchison, Leavenworth, and Fort Scott were pro-slavery enclaves on or near the military road, and both pro-slavery and free-soil raiders soon began to rampage up and down the Old Post Road (the Gum Springs-Fort Leavenworth study route), robbing and murdering travelers and citizenry in the name of their causes (Robbins 1978:99). Although the dragoons eventually resumed their patrols, the state of affairs encouraged emigrants bound for California, Oregon, or Utah to find a quieter jumping-off route, away from the bloody seam between Kansas and Missouri.

With the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, the Santa Fe traders shifted their outfitting operations from Kansas City/Westport to Fort Leavenworth and sent their wagon trains south along the protected government road to join the Santa Fe Trail (Brown 1988:86). Commercial trade wagons probably composed the bulk of the nonpartisan civilian traffic on the Gum Springs-Fort Leavenworth Route during the war years.

Evans-Hatch (2004a) write that “a number” of California and Oregon emigrants left written record of their travel on the Fort Leavenworth road, but they do not identify the emigrants or provide the number. Likewise, historian Louise Barry (1972:182) writes that a “good many emigrants to Oregon and California” crossed the Kansas River by way of Grinter’s Ferry on this route in the 1840s and early 1850s, but she does not provide details, either.

A query of OCTA’s COED database on the terms “Gum Springs,” “Fort Gibson,” and “Grinter” yielded no results confirming emigrant use of the Gum Springs-Fort Leavenworth Road. A query on “Dela” or “Dele” yielded one mention of the Delaware Mission from 1852 and a mention of the “Delaware reserve” from 1855. The term “Fort Leavenworth” was not queried because much documentation of that important fort has nothing to do with emigrant travel on this military road, and so the data would be meaningless. However, Kansas trails researcher Ross Marshall has identified two emigrants bound for California and one headed for Oregon who went by this route between 1850 and 1853. (Marshall reports that writer Francis Parkman went this way in 1846, but he was a travel writer, not an Oregon or California emigrant.) Based on Mattes’s rule-of-thumb ratio of 250 emigrants per record, an estimated 250 Oregon emigrants and 500 California emigrants traveled the Gum Springs-Fort Leavenworth Route.

The NPS has located no contemporaneous documentation that establishes LDS Church–organized Mormon emigration along this route. A number of Mormon companies (the precise number is uncertain) totaling up to 3,200 emigrants are known to have traveled from Westport to Fort Leavenworth in 1854 before jumping off onto the overland trails. They may have taken this road, and it would have been a reasonable choice, as the border troubles were just starting to simmer. The William Field Company, also traveling in 1854, camped outside of Fort Leavenworth, but the journals of company members Newton Tuttle, Thomas Poulter, and Lydia Alder state that they had reached the fort by riverboat from St. Louis. They did not follow the Gum Springs-Fort Leavenworth Route to reach the LDS campground.

**Conclusion:** In sum, the Gum Springs-Fort Leavenworth Route was part of a pre-emigration military road built to conduct army traffic between Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and Fort Gibson, Oklahoma. It also was used by Santa Fe freighters, who shifted their outfitting base from Independence/Westport to Fort Leavenworth in 1861–1865 in order to reach the Santa Fe Trail safely during the Civil War. Historians have stated that the Gum Springs-Fort Leavenworth Route was used by California and Oregon emigrants who jumped off at Westport, but they do not indicate the volume of emigrant traffic beyond Barry’s vague a “good many.” The primary timeframe for potential emigrant use of this route is from 1849, when Stansbury’s expedition opened a rough trail from Fort Leavenworth to the St. Joe Road near present-day Marysville, to the mid- to late 1850s, when factional violence erupted along the Kansas-Missouri border. Documentation is sparse for emigrant traffic on the Gum Springs-Fort Leavenworth Route. The number of identified records suggests that around 250 Oregon-bound emigrants and 500 California-bound emigrants traveled this route. The NPS has not located any primary documentation that shows that this trail was part of the Mormon emigration, but it could have been used by several church companies that traveled overland between Westport and Fort Leavenworth in 1854. There are several Oregon and California trail-related places of recreational and historical interest along this route, including Fort Leavenworth National Historic Landmark.

Designation of this route as part of the California, Oregon, or Mormon Pioneer national historic trails would add about 29 new miles to each of those NHTs and to the National Trails System.

**8. Fort Leavenworth-Kansas River Route.** This 61.5-mile trail section of military road runs between historic Fort Leavenworth, on the Missouri River, and its junction with the Independence Road at the Kansas River near Smith's Ferry, west of Topeka. The Fort Leavenworth-Kansas River Route is under consideration for addition to the California, Oregon, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails. Four miles of this route coincide with already designated routes of the California and Oregon national historic trails.

**Route Description:** The Fort Leavenworth-Kansas River study route begins in Fort Leavenworth at the river landing at the foot of Kearny Avenue. An impressive swale, dug by soldiers as a ramp for wagons debarking from the landing (K. Crow, personal communication, 2015), climbs the hill to the fort. The route heads west along Kearny Avenue, angles southwest along Hancock Avenue, and turns west again to cross a low ridge between the landmarks of Wagner Point and Government Hill. It then follows Fort Riley Military Road northwest, contouring around the south side of Sentinel Hill to Santa Fe Trail Road (US 73). It parallels that road west to Eightmile House, a trail landmark located northeast of the junction of US 73 and KS-192.

There the route turns southwesterly toward Easton and continues on to Winchester, Kansas. Beyond Winchester, the route continues southwest along a ridge to Lakeshore, on Perry Lake (a reservoir on the Delaware River). It crosses Perry Lake just south of the KS-92 bridge, passing through an area called the "Old Military Trail Campground" on the east side of the lake across from Ozawkie. From there the route continues southwest to Meriden, where it is commemorated by a historical marker, then goes southwesterly across numerous creek drainages to join the Independence Road near the junction of US 75 and US 24 at the north edge of Topeka. The combined route joins the Independence Road, which is part of the designated California and Oregon national historic trails, and continues southwest another 3 miles to the Kansas River at Smith's Ferry, near today's Northwest Huxman Road just west of Topeka. Emigrants traveling west on the Union Ferry Route could cross the Kansas River at Smith's Ferry and rejoin the Independence Road on the north side. There ends the Fort Leavenworth-Kansas River study route.

The historic military road this route follows, however, continued west to Fort Riley at Junction City, Kansas. From Fort Riley, emigrants could turn northwesterly up another military road to Fort Kearny, which had been scouted and improved by Lt. Francis Bryan in 1856–1857 and fully developed by Capt. E. G. Beckwith in 1858 (Jackson 1949). From there, they would join the Platte River trail corridor.

**Historical Assets:** The Fort Leavenworth-Kansas River study route spans nearly 100% farmland, where some trail trace may potentially yet remain. A deep wagon swale, cut by soldiers to accommodate traffic debarking from riverboats, leads from the river up to the fort, and at the top of the hill are historic military parade grounds and several buildings dating from the emigration era. Visitors to the Fort Leavenworth National Historic Landmark can follow a self-guided tour to 16 attractions at the fort. In Leavenworth City, which boasted its own steamboat landing, Leavenworth Landing Park follows the riverbank for a quarter-mile. Eightmile House still stands, 8 miles from the Fort Leavenworth parade grounds.

**Historical Summary:** Fort Riley, Kansas, was built in 1853–1855 at the fork of the Kansas River near the site of today's Junction City, Kansas. Fort Leavenworth, 130 miles to the east, was soon connected to Fort Riley by a water route on the Kansas River and a military road ("Fort Riley Military Road") that paralleled the stream's north bank (Jackson 1952:122–123). The military road intersected the Independence Road north of Topeka. The eastern portion of the Fort Riley Military Road, the section from Fort Leavenworth to the Kansas River, is described here as the Fort Leavenworth-Kansas River feasibility study route, which terminates at its junction with the Independence Road.

## Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes

According to the research of Evans-Hatch (2004b), some Oregon- and California-bound emigrants set out from Fort Leavenworth along this road to its intersection with the Independence Road near Smith's Ferry, on the Kansas River. However, Evans-Hatch cite only the writings of James Nesmith, a *New York Times* article, and the July 1850 *Stryker's American Register and Magazine*, Vol. 4, as referencing this route, and most of those references do not pertain to the Oregon and California emigrations.<sup>10</sup> Kansas trails researcher Ross Marshall has identified one Oregon-bound emigrant, Celinda Hines, who took this route from Fort Leavenworth to the Kansas River in 1853; and the reminiscences of James Norvell (1961:4), whose California-bound party crossed to Fort Leavenworth and "took [its] course up the Kaw River, then northwest across the Kansas Plains," also appears to document emigrant use of the Fort Leavenworth-Kansas River Route.<sup>11</sup> Probably few Oregon- and California-bound emigrants went this way, however, because it was indirect, dipping southwest before turning northwest to the Big Blue River. (Most travelers departing Fort Leavenworth would have followed the more direct Fort Leavenworth-Big Blue River Route northwesterly to meet up with the St. Joe Road at Marysville.) Another option, though, would have been to stay on the Fort Riley Military Road all the way to Fort Riley: from there, one could either continue west into Colorado (to reach the goldfields there or to join one of the Central Overland Emigrant routes into Wyoming), or turn north at Fort Riley and join yet another military road, or perhaps the "Mormon Road," to Fort Kearny on the Platte River. By the 1850s, choices were plentiful.

Evans-Hatch describe the Fort Leavenworth-Kansas River Route as a broad, multilane highway, implying a very high volume of traffic. However, this condition was not necessarily a result of emigration to Oregon, California, and Utah; it likely was produced by heavy military and freighting use and by participants in the Colorado gold rush of the late 1850s and early 1860s.

A query of OCTA's COED database for mention of Fort Riley yielded no results for emigrants bound for California, Oregon, or Utah, but numerous results for travelers whose destination was the Pikes Peak goldfields in the vicinity of Denver. The term "Fort Leavenworth" was not searched because much documentation of that important fort has nothing to do with emigrant use of this military road.

The NPS has located no documentary evidence of organized Mormon use of this road for travel to Utah.

**Conclusion:** In sum, the Fort Leavenworth-Kansas River Route follows the eastern portion of the Fort Riley Military Road, which was developed in the early to mid-1850s to carry army traffic between Fort

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<sup>10</sup> According to Mattes (1988), in 1843 Nesmith crossed the Missouri River from the area of Independence or Kansas City/Westport, not Fort Leavenworth. Further, the year of his travel predates the existence of the trail under study.

<sup>11</sup> Mattes (1988:624) says Hines's party crossed the Missouri River in the Kansas City area. The Santa Fe Trail Research website (2014) states that they landed at "Kansas," or Westport, and later crossed the Kansas River at Grinter's Ferry, which would put them on the Gum Springs route to Fort Leavenworth. However, Celinda's 1853 diary (Hines 1994) states that a "very intelligent Delaware chief" advised her party not to take "the government road by Fort Leavenworth," but to take "the divide route," instead. This appears to be reference to the geographical divide that separates the Kansas River watershed from drainages to the south, which is consistent with the Kansas River route. Her diary otherwise does not mention the fort nor say explicitly whether they took the chief's advice. However, it seems that the Hines party did take the Gum Springs route to Fort Leavenworth (the Fort Scott Military Road), intending to follow the Big Blue River route (Fort Leavenworth-Fort Kearny Military Road) from there, but changed their minds upon receiving the chief's advice and instead turned southwest down the trail toward the Kansas River (the Fort Riley Military Road). Hines's diary entry of May 12 notes that her party "Crossed the Grasshopper in a ferry." Root (1936) identifies the Grasshopper River as today's Delaware River, which drains into the Kansas River east of Topeka and which did have a ferry (although Root did not know where the pre-1861 ferry may have been located). This crossing places the party on the Fort Leavenworth-Kansas River Route. On May 13, Hines wrote that the party "intersected the southern road which crosses the Kansas at the upper ferry." By "southern road" she must mean the Independence Road, for three days later she reports passing the Potawatomi Mission at St. Marys, Kansas.



Leavenworth and Fort Riley, Kansas. Use of this road by many travelers to the Colorado mines is supported by historical documentation; however, research has turned up very little documentation supporting use of this route by emigrants bound for Oregon, Utah, and California. Emigrants taking this route would have had to have followed the Fort Leavenworth-Kansas River Route southwest to the Kansas River and then turned northwest on the Independence Road to the Little Blue River, an unnecessarily circuitous route compared with the much more direct Fort Leavenworth-Big Blue River Route, which is described below. Alternatively, travelers could have continued to Fort Riley and joined the 1857 military road leading north to Fort Kearny, which likewise appears to have little or no mileage advantage over the Big Blue River route. The Fort Leavenworth-Kansas River Route was a good choice for travelers continuing beyond Smith's Ferry to Fort Riley and the Colorado mining camps, and a feasible but probably less desirable option for those bound for the far West. Therefore, the NPS concludes that the lack of documentation does, in fact, signify a low volume of use of the Fort Leavenworth-Kansas River Route by Oregon and California emigrants. The NPS has located no evidence of use of the Fort Leavenworth-Kansas River Route by Utah-bound Mormon emigrants. Trail-related places of historical interest along the route include trail trace on private farmland, Eightmile House, and Fort Leavenworth National Historic Landmark.

The Fort Leavenworth-Kansas River Route is 61.5 miles long. Approximately 4 miles of the route coincide with existing designated routes of the Oregon and California national historic trails. Designation would add another 57.5 miles to both of those NHTs and to the National Trails System, and would add 61.5 miles to the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail.

**9. Fort Leavenworth-Big Blue River Route.** The Fort Leavenworth-Big Blue River Route was a 162-mile section of military road from Fort Leavenworth to the Big Blue River, where it joined the St. Joe Road at Marysville, Kansas. This route coincides for 53.5 miles with the existing designated Pony Express and California national historic trails. It is under consideration for addition to the California, Oregon, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails.

**Route Description:** The Fort Leavenworth-Big Blue River study route is coincident with the Fort Leavenworth-Kansas River Route for the first 8 miles west of the Fort Leavenworth landing. At Eightmile House, northeast of the junction of US 73 with KS-192, the trail splits. The Kansas River route continues as described above, while the Big Blue River route turns northwest to share a broad corridor with today's US 73 for about 4 miles to Big Eight Lake. The Fort Leavenworth-Big Blue River Route passes east of the lake and turns northwesterly, crossing US 59 about 4 miles southwest of Atchison. From there it continues north toward Lancaster. (Parts of this route west of Atchison intersect and/or correspond with routes of the Pony Express Trail coming from Atchison and St. Joseph, Missouri.) From Lancaster, the Big Blue River route follows a sinuous northwesterly course, traverses the south end of Clear Creek Lake at Atchison County Park, and crosses the Little Delaware River south of Horton. It arches northwest around Seneca and passes about 1.5 miles north of Axtell. The Fort Leavenworth-Big Blue River Route then turns west along an 1858 cutoff that appears on GLO plats of the era. It passes about 2.5 miles north of Beattie, crosses Vermillion Creek at Guittard Pony Express Station, and angles southwesterly to its junction with the St. Joe Road at Marysville, Kansas. From there the study route crosses the Big Blue River and continues westerly for another 10 miles along the St. Joe Road to merge with the Mississippi Saints study route along the Independence Road to Fort Kearny. The junction is about 3 miles east of Hanover, Kansas.

**Historical Assets:** Strongly associated with this military road is the historic town of Weston, Missouri, where emigrants outfitted before crossing the Missouri River to Leavenworth, Kansas. Due to flood-related channel changes, today the river is about 2 miles from the site of historic Weston Landing. Visitors to the Fort Leavenworth National Historic Landmark can follow a self-guided tour to 16 attractions at the fort. On the west bank of the river, a deep cut leads from the river up to the fort grounds. At the top of the hill are historic military parade grounds and several buildings dating to the

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

emigration era. Mileages along the various military roads were measured from the fort's flagpole; creeks (e.g., 110-Mile Creek) often were named for the distance from that flagpole to the stream crossing. The Fort Leavenworth-Big Blue River Route spans nearly 100% farmland, and it is possible that trail traces exist on private property. Historic Eightmile House still stands. In the city of Leavenworth, which had its own steamboat landing, Leavenworth Landing Park follows the riverbank for a quarter-mile. Historic Trails Park at Marysville has a replica ferry and interpretation about Marshall's Ferry, but no visible features remain of that ferry crossing.

**Historical Summary:** Fort Leavenworth was established in 1827 to protect the Santa Fe trade (NPS 2012) and serve as a base of operations on the Indian frontier. In 1845, Col. Stephen W. Kearny and his command of 280 dragoons headed northwest from Fort Leavenworth to join Cornelius Gilliam's 1844 "St. Joseph Trace," possibly in the vicinity of present Fairview or perhaps near St. Benedict (Carleton 1943; Werner 1991; Barry 1972:546, 608–609). Kearny's expedition proceeded west, cut its own ford of the Big Blue River, and continued up the Oregon Trail to Fort John/Fort Laramie in Wyoming (Barry 1972:545–546, 819, 899, 1294).<sup>12</sup>

When Captain Howard Stansbury of the US Army Corps of Topographical Engineers retraced Kearny's dragoon route in 1849, his party was joined by some California-bound emigrants who would accompany the military expedition all the way to Utah (Stansbury 1852:14). On its first day out of Fort Leavenworth, the company passed a party of Forty-niners who were encamped because some of its members had contracted cholera. The fifth day on the road, Stansbury's expedition met up with a band of Sauk Indians "levying contributions" from travelers crossing their lands. The day after that, Stansbury's expedition joined "the main emigration road from Kansas," probably meaning the St. Joe Road, and soon began encountering other wagon parties and emigrant graves along the approach to the Big Blue River (Stansbury 1852:14–17). All of this demonstrates that Stansbury was following a wagon trail that was already in use by emigrants. Mattes (1969:111) writes that a "substantial number" of Forty-niners started west on this road from the fort in order to avoid congestion at Independence and St. Joe.

On his return trip in 1850, Stansbury's eastbound expedition marched from the Big Blue River to Leavenworth via a new, improved, and more direct military road, which ran south of and roughly parallel to Kearny's dragoon route (Barry 1972:819–820). This trail became known as the "New Military Road," the "Fort Leavenworth-Fort Kearny Military Road," and the "Fort Leavenworth-Fort Laramie Road." In 1858, the route was further improved by the opening of a cutoff from Ash Point in Nemaha County almost directly west to the Big Blue River ford at Marysville, reducing the distance traveled by some 15 miles (Porter 1917). The Fort Leavenworth-Big Blue River study route follows the military road and the cutoff, which was used as a route west for California gold-seekers and Oregon emigrants, as well as for the military and freighters.

Emigrants departing from Leavenworth did not outfit themselves at the fort because the military compound was off-limits to civilians (Mattes 1969:111). Instead, they could outfit at Weston, Missouri, on the opposite side of the Missouri River and about 5 miles upstream of the fort (Root 1933b:9; Mattes 1969:111). It was at Weston in 1840 that John Bidwell heard Antoine Robidoux lecture about California, inspiring Bidwell to help organize the first overland wagon train to California the following year. Travelers were crossing the river there as early as 1844, when a ferry began operations between Weston and Fort Leavenworth (Root 1933a:9). Traffic increased in 1849 as gold-seekers (as noted by Stansbury) thronged toward California, and Weston-Fort Leavenworth was a major crossing by 1850, when the new military road from the fort to the Big Blue River was completed (Mattes 1969:112). Barry's 1972 compilation documents numerous parties who crossed there or from nearby landings to reach Fort Leavenworth in 1850–1854, although by the latter year many of those who crossed intended to settle in Kansas rather than cross the continent. A Missouri River flood destroyed the Weston landing

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<sup>12</sup> Part of Kearny's route, between Hiawatha and Fairview or St. Benedict, became the route of the St. Joe Road; see Carleton 1943:176–178.

in 1858, and later the border troubles and the Civil War disrupted emigrant traffic through Weston, as they did at other Missouri river ports.

Mattes (1988) documents 32 contemporaneous records for travelers leaving Fort Leavenworth for California and 10 emigrants bound for Oregon. A query of OCTA's COED emigrant database on the terms "Fort Leavenworth to Fort Kearny Rd," "new military road," and "New Fort Laramie Rd" yielded no results indicating use of this road by Oregon and California emigrants. A follow-up query on the jump-off attribute for Fort Leavenworth plus mention of "kearn" or "carn" identified an additional six California emigrants and an additional two Oregon emigrants that are not listed in Mattes. Total records identified for emigrants departing Fort Leavenworth, then, are 38 for California and 12 for Oregon.

The COED reports cited above do not distinguish between the two study routes out of Fort Leavenworth, the Kansas River route and the Big Blue River route. The Fort Leavenworth-Big Blue River Route/Fort Kearny Military Road was the most direct wagon route from the fort to the St. Joe Road and thence to the South-side Platte River Corridor. Research on this route establishes that it was well used during the California gold rush, whereas research on the Fort Leavenworth-Kansas River Route to date has identified only a couple of emigrant parties that went that way. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the traveler accounts reported above are presumed to relate to the Fort Leavenworth-Big Blue River Route rather than the Fort Leavenworth-Kansas River Route. Using Mattes's ratio of 250 emigrants per record, this route was traveled by an estimated 9,500 emigrants bound for California and 3,000 bound for Oregon.

Judging from the LDS Church History pioneer database, at least two Mormon emigrant companies (the 81-member Philip De La Mare Company and the 18-member Douglas Richard family) camped at Salt Creek near Fort Leavenworth in 1852. In 1854, the William Field, Darwin Richardson, James Brown, and Pratt-Benson-Eldridge, and Thomas S. Williams companies, totaling 276 members, gathered at Salt Creek, but Hans Hoth, traveling with the Williams group, reported some 2,000 Latter-day Saints encamped there.

These emigrants probably followed the Fort Leavenworth-Big Blue River Route to its junction with the St. Joe Road. The journals of Robert Hodgert and Isaac Groo, both of the 63-member William Field Company, note the company's departure from their Salt Creek encampment outside of Leavenworth, their arrival at the St. Joe Road, and their crossing of the Big Blue River. They mention no major landmarks between the camp and the St. Joe Road, which is consistent with this direct route across the undeveloped prairie.

Also carrying traffic onto the Fort Leavenworth-Big Blue River Route was a short collector trail from Atchison, situated on the Missouri River northwest of Leavenworth. Most of the long-distance traffic on this route, which Mattes (1969) calls the Atchison Road, consisted of overland stagecoaches and commercial freight wagons bound for Utah; however, some 2,070 Mormon emigrants who outfitted at Atchison in 1855 and 1856 followed the Atchison Road to its junction with the Fort Leavenworth-Big Blue River Route, about 25 miles northwest of Leavenworth. If these Mormon emigrants then followed the military road or close variants all the way to Marshall's Ferry, they traveled approximately 125 miles of the 150-mile Fort Leavenworth-Big Blue River Route (see Kimball 1988). However, based on his reading of emigrant journals, Kansas trails researcher Morris Werner (2012:2) concludes that the Mormons followed only parts of the military road, sometimes leaving it and breaking entirely new trail, eventually to join the St. Joe emigrant road at Baker's Ford on the South Fork of the Big Nemaha River, approximately 7 miles north of Seneca, Kansas.<sup>13</sup> In that case, Mormons may have traveled substantially fewer miles along this study route.

**Conclusion:** In sum, the trail between Fort Leavenworth and the Big Blue River at Marysville, Kansas, was developed between about 1849 and 1850 by a combination of military, commercial, and emigration

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<sup>13</sup> Go to "Early Trails in Nemaha County" at <<http://seneca-ks.com/1857-1/nemaha1855.htm>> to view 1855 to 1857 surveyors' plats showing the locations of Murphy Lake, Baker's Ford, and the St. Joe Road.

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

traffic. Emigrants were reported on the Fort Leavenworth-Big Blue River Route in 1849, and a military road was established along the route the following year. Documentation establishes use of the Fort Leavenworth-Big Blue River Route (historically called the Fort Leavenworth-Fort Kearny Military Road, among other names) by an estimated 9,500 California emigrants and 3,000 Oregon emigrants. About 2,070 Mormon emigrants from Mormon Grove, near Atchison, merged onto and followed at least parts of the Fort Leavenworth-Big Blue River Route in 1855 and 1856, and an estimated 2,100 Mormons who outfitted at Salt Creek/Fort Leavenworth in 1854 also likely used this route. Trail-related places of historical interest include Eightmile House, Fort Leavenworth National Historic Landmark, and a small interpretive park at Marysville, Kansas.

The Fort Leavenworth-Big Blue River study route is 162 miles long. The route coincides for 53.5 miles with the designated California and Pony Express national historic trails. Further designation of this route would add 108.5 new miles to the California National Historic Trail and to the National Trails System, and would add 162 miles to the Oregon and Mormon Pioneer NHTs.

**10. Atchison Road.** This 9-mile collector route begins at the Missouri River in Atchison, Kansas, and links to the Fort Leavenworth-Big Blue River Route near Shannon, Kansas. It is under consideration for addition to the California, Oregon, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails.

**Route Description:** The trail out of Atchison, which Mattes (1969:111) calls the Atchison Road, originated on the east side of town at a river landing at the foot of Atchison Street. For the purposes of this study, the route begins at Riverfront Park in downtown Atchison. From there it heads west across town to Amelia Earhart Stadium on 14th Street, then turns northwest to follow a ridge between the drainages of Deer Creek and White Clay Creek to today's Amelia Earhart Airport, about three and a half miles west of the Missouri River waterfront.

From the airport, the Atchison route curves southwest and then northwest, keeping to a ridge between the Deer Creek and White Clay Creek drainages. It connects with the Fort Leavenworth-Big Blue River Route, historically known as the Fort Leavenworth-Fort Kearny or Fort Leavenworth-Fort Laramie Military Road, about two and a half miles east of Lancaster.

**Historical Assets:** The vicinity of Mormon Grove is marked by a roadside state historical sign located at the intersection of US 73 and Osage Road, about a mile west of the junction of the Atchison and Independence Creek routes. The historical site of the Mormon Grove encampment is several miles west of Atchison near the head of the South Fork of Deer Creek, in the vicinity of Osage Road. Immediately south of the old encampment is the site of a 160-acre "Mormon farm," established to help support LDS emigrants, and beyond the western edge of the farm lies an unmarked Mormon cemetery. North of the encampment, on the east bank of South Fork of Deer Creek near the center of T5N R20E S29, lies a spring that, historically, flowed abundantly. Local tradition holds that Mormon emigrants used this spring as a water source. All of these Mormon sites are on private land. Due largely to agricultural activities, no visible evidence of the graves, the farm, or the Mormon Grove encampment has been identified. However, landowners recall that a fence once protected the cemetery; recent archeological work there has identified disturbed earth and recovered fragments of bone, and investigators are studying a historic stone house and an area of disturbed earth that appear to relate to the Mormon presence there (M. Bashore, personal communication, 3/29/2012). Geophysical work might identify subsurface traces of these features. The sites are not adjacent to the Atchison Road route but are nearby and are solidly associated with Mormon use of the route.

**Historical Summary:** The locality of Atchison, at a bend in the Missouri River approximately 50 miles north of Leavenworth, was originally settled and farmed by the Kanza (Kaw) Indians. The Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery, celebrating the Fourth of July 1804 at the mouth of a stream they named Independence Creek, noted the presence of multiple "Indian paths" in the area.

In 1841, the first white settler, George M. Million, homesteaded east of the future Atchison town site. By 1850 he had established a flatboat ferry in the vicinity “and operated it for seven or eight years and did a thriving business during the great gold rush to California” (Ingalls 2008:42; Root 1933b). In contrast to that claim, historian Walker Wyman (1942:297) writes, “Apparently few emigrants other than those destined for the nearby farm land crossed the river” at Atchison in those early years. He reports no evidence for a flood of gold-seekers crossing the Missouri River at Atchison during the California gold rush.

However, in 1854 with passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, Kansas was opened to white settlement. Among those who poured into the territory that year was a small party of Missourians who arrived in mid-July, searching for the ideal site to establish a new pro-slavery town. They chose the river bend location, bought out Million’s claim, and formed a town company to begin planning for the town of Atchison.

Seizing upon a promising business lead, the fledgling town company invited The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to consider Atchison as a freighting and emigration outfitting locale (Addoms, n.d.; Woods and Bashore 2002:40–41). The benefits of the location were clear: Atchison was farther north and west than the major freighting center of Leavenworth, boasted an excellent river landing, offered plenty of feed and water for draft animals, and was near the established Fort Leavenworth-Fort Kearny Military Road. In addition, emigrants outfitting here could save up to a week or more of travel over the difficult road from Fort Leavenworth (Wingo 2014). The new town reached agreement with church officials, and in spring 1855, several thousand Mormon emigrants disembarked from Missouri River boats at the Atchison landing to travel to Utah with the church freight trains. A number of the new arrivals immediately found employment constructing streets and other civic projects for the brand new town.

Also that spring, several businessmen selected Atchison as an outfitting point for their cross-country freighting operations, and they likewise employed Mormon emigrants. A short, westerly trail developed from the river landing to the Fort Leavenworth-Fort Kearny Military Road (here, the Fort Leavenworth-Big Blue River study route) as Atchison quickly blossomed into a major freighting center and began shipping goods and supplies to Denver; Forts Kearny, Laramie, Bridger, and Douglas; and other points west (Ingalls 2008:72–73). Salt Lake City, in particular, became an important destination for Missouri River freight through Atchison (Wyman 1942).

Around 2,200 of the LDS emigrants arriving in 1855 assembled at an outfitting encampment, or more accurately, a temporary village site, which the English converts called Mormon Grove (L. Anderson, personal communication, 9/05/2012).<sup>14</sup> The site was located four and a half miles west of Atchison. Adjacent to the camp, the Mormons built a ditch-and-sod fence around a quarter-section of prairie to exclude their livestock from a vast vegetable garden they had planted to help feed the gathering emigrants (Kimball 1980; Kansas State Historical Society 1941). Mormon Grove and the fenced garden became part of a growing complex of sites related to the Mormon emigration out of Atchison.<sup>15</sup>

But a deadly epidemic struck the Mormon emigration that season, beginning even before their arrival at the outfitting grounds. While traveling on riverboats between St. Louis and Atchison, the LDS converts

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<sup>14</sup> Many of these emigrants debarked from riverboats at Atchison. One company arrived at Mormon Grove after traveling overland from Texas (Werner 1999:E14), and two other companies were forced to land at Leavenworth because the Missouri River was too low for the steamboat to reach Atchison. The latter two companies, about 200 persons total, encamped outside of Leavenworth, where scurvy and cholera claimed some lives, and moved to Mormon Grove later that spring (LDS Church pioneer database, 2014). In all, eight companies outfitted at Mormon Grove for the trek to Utah in 1855 (Werner 1999:E14).

<sup>15</sup> The locations of Mormon Grove, the farm, and an associated cemetery are recorded on the 1855 surveyor general’s territorial plat. Part of the map of the area is published in Woods and Bashore (2002:50). Ingalls (2008:36) noted at the time of his writing that traces of the Mormon Farm trench-fence were still visible, but agricultural activities already had destroyed physical traces of the graves.

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began dying of cholera. More died after landing at Atchison, others passed away as they lay in wagons on the road to Mormon Grove, and still others died at the encampment. Many of the victims are buried in an unmarked cemetery on private land northwest of the Mormon Grove campground. LDS Church History researcher Laura Anderson, who has devoted years to investigating the emigrant experience at Mormon Grove, has identified 69 probable burials (L. Anderson, personal communication, 7/27/2012) and believes there are more.

In addition to the emigrants encamped at Mormon Grove that spring, an 89-member company of Latter-day Saints led by Captain Seth Blair camped separately about two and a half miles outside of Atchison to avoid mixing their livestock with the herd at Mormon Grove (L. Anderson, personal communication, 7/27/2012). Because most of these converts had traveled north by wagon from Milam County, Texas, they are called the Texas Saints (Werner 1999:E14). Initially the Texas Saints appear to have dodged the cholera epidemic that raged through the Mormon Grove campsite, but their fortune did not hold. Blair's company started down the Fort Leavenworth Military Road (Big Blue River Route) toward Salt Lake City on June 15, and two days later cholera began claiming lives among them. In a letter dated June 24, 1855, Captain Blair described "just such a scene of death you never witnessed on earth," with a life lost roughly every three hours during the first 36 hours of the epidemic (Blair 1855). Burial details labored day and night. "The cry of the dying and shrieks of the living presented nothing but the true scene, even all the horrors of death imaginable," Blair wrote. The suffering company left the road at times, traveling and camping separately while trying to manage the epidemic. At the Kickapoo Trading Post west of Kennekuk, Kansas, the Texas Saints turned off the military road to start working their way north, eventually breaking new trail across the prairie to reach the St. Joe Road at the head of Deer Creek. The cholera victims, at least 30 of them, lie in anonymous graves between Mormon Grove and the Nemaha River. Some researchers believe most are buried on a hilltop near Murphy Lake, about 5 miles north of Seneca, Kansas.<sup>16</sup>

More than 2,000 survivors of the Mormon Grove epidemic rolled on toward Utah that summer.<sup>17</sup> Church records show that 67 Mormon converts, financially unable to continue west that year, were still residing

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<sup>16</sup> Kansas trails researcher Morris Werner wrote a series of reports on the events at Mormon Grove (Werner 1988b, 1988c, 1988d, and 1999). In "Mormon Disaster at Murphy Lake" (1988d), he reported a persistent local tradition about a party of Mormons who overwintered at a cholera "death camp" in 1853–1854 at Murphy Lake, near the mouth of Deer Creek on the South Fork of the Nemaha River. (An 1857 plat annotated by modern researchers, which can be found at <http://seneca-ks.com/1857-1/12-1.htm>, shows the location of Murphy Lake.) Werner eventually concluded that the rumor is probably associated with the 1855 Mormon Grove emigration; however, LDS emigration records show that all of its Atchison companies reached Salt Lake City that summer, with just a few people remaining behind at Mormon Grove. In a 2012 paper, "The Kansas Odyssey of the Texas Latter Day Saints," Werner proposes that the mysterious "Murphy Lake Mormons" were in fact Seth Blair's Texas Saints, who evidently halted there in August 1855 as cholera ravaged the company. Mary Williams Cox, who was a child of about nine years when her family settled nearby at the head of Deer Creek earlier that summer, remembered seeing "many Mormons" passing the homestead when she was a child. "Forty in the party died," she recalled. "They were buried near [Murphy Lake]. Many of them had cholera. When they left the encampment they left behind them beds, wearing apparel and clothing of all kinds scattered around. I saw clothing that was torn off the dead, three or four months after the Mormons left" (Tennal 1916:61). None of the Mormon company overwintered at Murphy Lake, though; rather, the surviving Texas Saints continued their trek and reached Salt Lake City on September 10. The rumor of overwintering Mormons, Werner suggests, may be linked to an LDS couple, unaffiliated with any of the Atchison companies, who appear to have independently homesteaded along the South Fork of the Nemaha River in the mid-1850s.

<sup>17</sup> Woods and Bashore (2002:49), based on the annual immigration statistics report for 1855, write that eight companies comprising 2,030 surviving emigrants continued to Utah from Mormon Grove. Mormon historian Stanley Kimball (1988:130) puts the count at 2,041 emigrants; and Mormon Grove researcher Laura Anderson reports that the departing Mormon companies that year comprised 2,061 emigrants, along with many others who hired out as teamsters to work their way West with the freight wagons. Anderson writes,

at Mormon Grove in the autumn of 1855. Some proportion of them overwintered there; others, reportedly run out by “Kansas squatters,” scattered, likely seeking employment. Mormon historian Stanley Kimball (1980) reported that 97 emigrants overwintered in the area and departed Mormon Grove for Salt Lake City in spring 1856. The source of Kimball’s count is difficult to ascertain, and his number appears to be too high.

In a *New York Daily Tribune* article published January 24, 1856, a “special correspondent” wrote of visiting the campsite and observing “one or two Mormons living at the Grove and its vicinity” in the dead of winter (Kansas State Historical Society 1941). Later, LDS member Jens Christian Nielson wrote in his journal of going to Atchison in May 1856 to gather the remaining Latter-day Saints aboard a steamer in order to join that year’s emigration out of Omaha. “We was 21 persons,” he wrote. Therefore, between 20 (Nielson’s witnessed number) and 67 (the record-based number) Latter-day Saints overwintered in the Mormon Grove/Atchison area and departed in spring 1856.

The LDS Church abandoned Mormon Grove that year in favor of sending its newly arrived immigrants by rail to a new outfitting post at Iowa City, Iowa, and thence by road to the Missouri River along the border of Nebraska (Woods and Bashore 2002:50). However, the church continued freighting from Atchison for another decade.

Use of all or parts of the Fort Leavenworth-Big Blue River Route by nine companies of Mormon emigrants out of Atchison in 1855 and 1856, then, is documented by numerous 19th-century newspaper articles, letters, journals, and emigrant reminiscences and autobiographies that mention Atchison, Mormon Grove, and the crossing of the Big Blue River. (Werner does not trace the route of the other seven companies who departed from Mormon Grove at about the same time as the Texas Saints in 1855, but it seems likely that they stayed on the military road.) An 1855 government survey map plots the location of the Mormon farm and outfitting camp near the trail. Archeological evidence of the cemetery and features that may be related to the Mormon Grove campground have been documented, and a nearby historic stone farmhouse built in the mid-1800s may be linked to the Mormon encampment (M. Bashore, personal communication, 3/29/2012).

Documented non-Mormon traffic through Atchison in the mid- and late 1850s was related almost exclusively to the freighting business, to the Pikes Peak gold rush in Colorado, and to the influx of settlers wanting to homestead in Kansas or to weigh in on whether the new territory would enter the Union as a free-soil or a slave state. Ferry traffic from Missouri during those years was heavy. George Root, in his 1933 article entitled “Ferries in Kansas,” reports that the Kansas legislature in 1855 granted Million and four partners rights to maintain a ferry at Atchison, which indicates that business was brisk at that time. In June 1857, operators of a rival ferry published an advertisement directed “TO KANSAS EMIGRANTS,” announcing that their new steam ferry was “fully prepared to cross wagons, horses, cattle, footmen, etc., at any time without delay” (Root 1933b:118).<sup>18</sup> This ad was directed toward emigrants bound for Kansas, not for those planning to continue west to Oregon or California.

Violence stemming from passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854 may have induced travelers to avoid the Kansas/Missouri border and choose alternate routes and jumping-off places in the mid-1850s. According to Ingalls (2008:55), “Atchison county took a prominent part in the border warfare,” and by May 1856 “the whole countryside was aflame with the passion of war.” Steamboats on the Missouri River were fired upon by both pro- and anti-Union factions, and “in spite of armor-plated pilot houses and a thousand-dollar bounty, some rivermen refused to guide their craft on a single perilous trip from St. Louis to Leavenworth” (Goodrich 1995:128). This means that steamboat traffic carrying travelers

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“Many freighters bought wagons and outfitted on the Missouri [River] and planned on employing teamsters from among the Mormons, then sold the wagons in Salt Lake City.” In payment, teamsters’ families were allowed to travel with the freight wagons.

<sup>18</sup> Root attributes the ad to the *Atchison Champion*; however, that newspaper did not exist in 1857. The ad likely appeared in the free-state *Squatter Sovereign*.

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upstream to Atchison was diminished, as well. During the Civil War years, guerilla warfare and military action made western Missouri a dangerous place for travelers to venture.

Missourians fleeing the state continued to cross the river at the established jumping-off towns along the Missouri-Kansas border. Residents and travelers through the area were victimized by partisans on both sides of the Missouri-Kansas border. James Norvell, whose family left their farm near St. Louis to head west in 1861, recalled that the “long, bitter struggle” for control of Kansas “was still raging in every settlement in the Territory.” Emigrants from Missouri, in particular, were viewed with suspicion as they crossed the Kansas prairies. Norvell (1961:4) wrote that “there were bad men on both sides who perpetrated many crimes against the emigrants; and then excused themselves, by claiming that such emigrants belonged to the opposite [pro-slavery or free soil] party.” However, people departing from more northerly states could avoid the border troubles altogether by jumping off onto the overland trails from outfitting towns in Iowa and Nebraska; and those from the South could take more southerly routes such as the Cherokee Trail. By all available evidence, that is what most overlanders bound for California and Oregon did at that time.<sup>19</sup>

Beginning in 1858 and over the next several years, thousands of gold-rushers, many probably from Missouri, crossed the river at Atchison to make a dash for the Pikes Peak goldfields. By the mid-1860s, though, “Atchison was definitely on the decline as a factor in the westward movement of emigrants” (Wyman 1942:299).

Historical documentation does not support Atchison as an important jumping-off place for the California and Oregon emigrations through the 1840s–1860s. A query of the COED database for the term “Atchison” was not conducted because it would result overwhelmingly in freighting, stage line, and mail records as opposed to emigrant references. Mattes (1988) shows 39 records relating to crossings of the Missouri River at Atchison. The majority of those were prospectors heading to Colorado, Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho in the 1860s; a number were LDS converts (mostly Mormon Grove emigrants) bound for Utah; and the rest were eastbound travelers and men departing by stage on short-term business, not for emigration purposes. Only one of the travelers chronicled by Mattes was a settler bound for Oregon. Similarly, the NPS found documentation for only two California-bound emigrants who set out from Atchison. This pair, brothers Joe and John Taylor, crossed the Missouri River on George Million’s newly opened flatboat ferry in 1850 to start for the California goldfields. In an 1896 biographical sketch published in the *Atchison Daily Globe*, John Taylor recalled that “there was no wagon road running west from Atchison at that time,” indicating a very low level of outbound traffic from that crossing (the town of Atchison did not yet exist) in spring 1850 (Howe 2012).

**Conclusion:** In sum, approximately 2,070 Mormon emigrants departed Mormon Grove for Utah in 1855 and 1856. They traveled out of Atchison from the Missouri River to Mormon Grove and continued from there along the Atchison freight road to join the Fort Leavenworth-Fort Kearny Military Road (Fort Leavenworth-Big Blue River study route). Research has identified only two California-bound gold-seekers and one Oregon-bound homesteader documented to have departed overland from Atchison. Trail-related places of historical interest along the Atchison freight road at present consist of an interpretive historical sign near the Mormon Grove campsite and unmarked archeological remains at the campground, Mormon farm, and cemetery sites, all on private agricultural ground.

Designation of the Atchison route from the Missouri River to the Big Blue River would add 9 new miles each to the Oregon, California, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails and to the National Trails System.

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<sup>19</sup> For descriptions of the impacts of the border raids and the Civil War on travel, mail, commerce, and society across Missouri and along the Kansas-Missouri border, see, for example, Evan Carton’s (2006) *Patriotic Treason: John Brown and the Soul of America*, especially page 179; Thomas Goodrich’s (1995) *Black Flag: Guerrilla Warfare on the Western Border, 1861-1865*, especially page 128; and Michael Fellman’s (1989) *Inside War: The Guerilla Conflict in Missouri During the American Civil War*.



**11. Independence Creek Route.** This 6-mile route begins on Independence Creek about 8 miles northwest of Atchison and connects to the Atchison Road some 5 miles west of town. It is under consideration for addition to the California, Oregon, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails.

**Route Description:** The 5-mile-long Independence Creek study route, as it is currently mapped for feasibility study purposes, begins inland on Independence Creek, several miles from the Missouri River and approximately 8 miles northwest of Atchison. It heads southeast to cross Deer Creek and joins the Atchison Road route at today's Amelia Earhart Airport, 5 miles east of Atchison.

**Historical Assets:** No trail-related places of historical or recreational interest have been identified along the Independence Creek study route.

**Historical Summary:** The alignment of the Independence Creek study route is puzzling, as it appears to begin at an isolated location in hilly country some 8 miles from the Missouri River, where emigrants would have debarked. However, the Atchison County Historical Society reports that the study route is but a short segment of a 19th-century military road known historically as the Old Fort Kearny Road, the Council Bluff or Council Bluffs Road, and the Old Military Road. To avoid confusion with the Old Fort Kearny Road and Council Bluffs Road feasibility study routes in Nebraska, this discussion hereafter refers to the extended Independence Creek Route as the Old Military Road.

The Old Military Road ran north out of Fort Leavenworth, passed a few miles west of Atchison, continued north to or through the vicinity of Old Fort Kearny (present-day Nebraska City, Nebraska), and terminated either at old Fort Atkinson on Council Bluff in Nebraska, about 20 miles north of Omaha and just east of Fort Calhoun, or at the Council Bluffs Indian Agency at Bellevue, Nebraska.<sup>20</sup> An 1855 Kansas Territorial map produced by the Surveyor General's office shows the road heading northwesterly from its junction with the feeder route from Atchison, crossing Deer Creek, and continuing to Independence Creek. The mapped alignment ends at the north section line because, explains Atchison Historical Society researcher Dea Yanke, the surveyor responsible for the adjacent section did not make note of the Old Military Road. Consequently, on paper, it simply ends at the section

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<sup>20</sup> Werner (1988e) writes that an 1834 US War Department map depicts the Old Military Road going north from Fort Leavenworth to the site of "Fort Calhoun" (Fort Atkinson), about 20 miles north of Omaha. (Fort Atkinson originally was to be named after Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, but instead it was named after its first commander, Col. Henry Atkinson. Today's Fort Calhoun is a Nebraska town; it never existed as a military fort.)

Fort Atkinson was built atop the Lewis & Clark landmark of Council Bluff, Nebraska, in 1820 and was abandoned in 1827, the year Fort Leavenworth was established. It seems unlikely, given the brief temporal overlap, that a military road would have been established to link the two forts. However, Barry (1972:380) reports that on September 5, 1839, "From Fort Leavenworth, Col. Stephen W. Kearny, Maj. Clifton Wharton, and two First US dragoon squadrons commanded by Capt. Nathan Boone and James Allen marched northward on the 'Council Bluffs road' (across Leavenworth, Atchison, and Doniphan counties of today) toward the Platte." The purpose of the march was to treat with the Otoes, Missourias, and Potawatomis at the Council Bluffs Indian Agency at Bellevue, Nebraska. Barry's source is Louis Pelzer's *Marches of the Dragoons*, which in turn cites an 1839 report by an unnamed member of the expedition. It seems possible that the two Council Bluffs have become confused by researchers.

The NPS has not succeeded in locating the 1834 map cited by Werner, but judging from his description of the document, it is geographically vague. Pelzer (1917) does not provide particulars as to the route of the military road, either. The 1855 Surveyor General's map plots the road as far as Independence Creek, near Atchison. Clearly, a military trail or road going north from Fort Leavenworth, through the vicinities of Atchison and Old Fort Kearny, and continuing north at least as far as Bellevue, Nebraska, was in use by at least 1839 and possibly as early as 1834. Its alignment north from Independence Creek, however, bears further investigation.

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

line. At present, the Old Military Road's continuing route beyond Independence Creek is not part of this study.

**Conclusion:** In sum, the Independence Creek study route is a small segment of a historic military road that ran north from Fort Leavenworth and ended beyond Old Fort Kearny, Nebraska. The NPS is aware of no primary or secondary documentation of purposeful Oregon, California, or Mormon emigrant use of that historic road.

Designation of this route from the head of Independence Creek to the Big Blue River would add approximately 6 new miles each to the Oregon, California, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails and to the National Trails System.

**12. Atchison to Kennekuk Pony Express Route.** This 22-mile route begins at Atchison, Kansas, and joins with the original Pony Express route coming from St. Joseph, Missouri, 2 miles east of Kennekuk, Kansas. It is under consideration for addition to the Pony Express National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** This mail route begins at the site of the Massasoit Hotel, which served as the 1861 Atchison headquarters of the Pony Express, on the corner of Main and South 2nd streets. It runs west along Main Street for 2 miles, then turns northwest along Pratt Road to 286th Road (historically, the "Parallel Road"). The route soon leaves the highway to arc north around the headwaters of White Clay Creek, crosses the south end of Amelia Earhart Airport, and returns to 286th Road. Now it follows the road alignment due west for about six and a half miles to Lancaster Station at Lancaster, Kansas. From there it turns north up South Broadway for three-quarters of a mile to meet the old wagon road out of Atchison (see Atchison-Independence Creek Routes, above). The combined route now runs northwest for about 2 miles and crosses US 73. Continuing northwesterly, it crosses the west end of Clear Creek Lake at Atchison County Park and joins the original, designated Pony Express route about 2 miles east of Kennekuk, Kansas.

**Historical Assets:** A granite Pony Express monument stands at the northwest corner of Main and South 3rd streets in Atchison, at the former site of the Massasoit Hotel. The hotel itself was destroyed by fire in 1873. No visible evidence of the Lancaster Station remains, but a granite monument is located at the corner of 286th Road and High Street in Lancaster. No physical remains related to the Pony Express are visible on the route or at Kennekuk, but a plaque and a granite monument at the intersection of 330th and Chautauqua roads commemorate the station.

**Historical Summary:** St. Joseph, Missouri, is celebrated as the headquarters and eastern terminus of the cross-country Pony Express route, beginning with the first westbound rider's departure on April 3, 1860. However, Anthony Godfrey (1994:108) reports that the terminus may have been switched from St. Joseph to Atchison, Kansas, during the final months of Pony operations in 1861. More recently, postal historians Frajola et al. (2005:55) write that the eastern terminus was switched to Atchison in September 1861; and Pony Express Trail Association researcher Joe Nardone has compiled a collection of contemporaneous newspaper articles confirming that the switch was made at that time largely due to secessionist disruption of the strategic transportation and communications hub of St. Joseph.

Missouri, a slave state, was admitted to the Confederacy in November 1861, but the Union refused to recognize the state's secession. Officially, Missouri remained part of the Union. However, Union control of the state was tenuous. About a month after the Civil War broke out on April 12, 1861, a mob of Southern sympathizers tore down and destroyed a US flag at the St. Joseph Post Office.<sup>21</sup> Federal troops

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<sup>21</sup> Jackie Lewin, director of St. Joseph Museums, Inc., observes that "the leader of the Southern sympathizers that tore the Union flag from the post office was former Mayor Jeff Thompson, the one who had sent the first [Pony Express] rider off on April 3 with a rousing speech" (personal communication, 10/20/2012).

arrived in mid-June to occupy the town, but they were reassigned in late July. Confederate militia moved in to fill the vacancy, which in turn caused civilian Union supporters to flee to Kansas.

On September 3, 1861, a partially burned Hannibal & St. Joseph Railroad bridge over Missouri's Platte River east of St. Joseph collapsed, killing nearly 20 train passengers and injuring at least 100 more. The wreck is attributed to Confederate saboteurs. At about the same time, violent pro-slavery partisans entered St. Joseph, as did some renegade federal soldiers from Kansas to loot the town and raid the countryside. Transportation and communications infrastructure was destroyed and the city was left in ruins (Filbert 2001:38–49).

One of Nardone's newspaper clippings, printed September 7, 1861, in the pro-Union *Elwood Free Press* ("Telegraph Removed"), reports that "St. Joseph is now without a telegraph, a railroad, and without her best citizens." A September 14, 1861, article published in the pro-Union *St. Louis Daily Missouri Republican* ("Affairs at St. Joseph") states,

All we can hear confirm previous reports that the secessionists have full possession of St. Joseph, and are doing pretty much as they please in that city.

It is represented that they have taken control of the municipal affairs of the corporation, preventing egress and ingress of both mails and travelers...The [Missouri River] steamer Omaha has been seized and appropriated to their purposes, and we learn that an effort was made to send the mail out by hand-car, but that it was intercepted and taken back; hence a complete blockade exists, which accounts for our getting no mail matter.

The Confederate combatants left St. Joseph, now nearly deserted by both pro-Union and secessionist civilians, just ahead of returning Union forces. The Pony Express, according to Nardone's research, moved its headquarters to Atchison on or about September 14; Frajola et al. (2005) identify September 11 as the date of the switch.<sup>22</sup> Federal troops from Illinois arrived in St. Joseph on September 15 and occupied the town until the end of the war.

Westbound Pony Express mail was still collected and cancelled in St. Joseph before being placed aboard a train to Atchison.<sup>23</sup> At Atchison it was loaded onto the stagecoach (operated by the Central Overland California & Pikes Peak Express, or COC&PPE, the same company that ran the Pony Express) for transport to Fort Kearny, Nebraska, thence to continue west by the famous horse and rider relay. Eastbound Pony mail from California was carried on horseback to Fort Kearny and put on the stagecoach for delivery to the route's eastern terminus at the Atchison Post Office, where it was cancelled (Frajola et al. 2005).

The decision to carry the Pony mail by stagecoach across northeastern Kansas and southeastern Nebraska had nothing to do with the war troubles and in fact was partially implemented even before the destruction of St. Joseph. Nardone points out that the Pony Express parent company, the COC&PPE, was subcontracted by the Overland Mail Company to carry the post from the Missouri River to Salt Lake City. The March 12, 1861, contract allowed COC&PPE to send the Pony Express "light mail" along with the regular "heavy mail" by stagecoach, provided that the stage could meet the same schedule as the horse-and-rider courier. COC&PPE began shipping Pony Express mail by stage between St. Joseph and

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<sup>22</sup> Nardone cites a philatelic book with a September 14, 1861, Atchison handfrank report.

<sup>23</sup> St. Joseph was selected as headquarters for the Pony Express largely because it was the western terminus of the Hannibal & St. Joseph Railroad, the only railroad of the time to span Missouri from east to west. By mid-August 1861, according to Frajola et al. (2005:57), franked envelopes that were preaddressed to the Pony Express agent in St. Joseph became available for purchase, and "these franked envelopes were deposited directly into the United States postal system and transmitted individually to the Pony Express agent in St. Joseph." Beginning in September 1861, those posted envelopes were collected and bagged in St. Joseph and sent on by rail, presumably the new (1860) Atchison & St. Joseph line, to Atchison for transmittal to the West.

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

Marysville, Kansas, in mid- to late August 1861. Once operation headquarters were moved to Atchison, the Pony mail was carried by stage from Atchison all the way to Fort Kearny, Nebraska.

Frank A. Root was employed at the Atchison Post Office in 1861, and in 1863 he worked as an express messenger on the Overland Stage between Atchison and Denver. In his reminiscences about the Pony Express and Overland Stage, he wrote,

During the last six or seven weeks before the [Pony Express] was abandoned, there were on an average 700 letters a week brought by the 'pony' through from the Pacific coast The telegraph having been finished from the Missouri river to Fort Kearney, the letter pouches were brought from there to Atchison by the overland stage....In those last few weeks [before the Pony Express ended in October 1861] every [westbound] pony express letter was mailed at the Atchison post-office....

(Root and Connelly 1901:117)

**Conclusion:** In sum, the transfer of Pony Express headquarters and the eastern terminus of the Pony Express from St. Joseph to Atchison in mid-September 1861 was precipitated by partisan violence in Missouri during the Civil War. For the final six weeks or so of Pony Express operations, Pony “light” mail was carried by Overland Stage between Atchison and Fort Kearny, Nebraska. Pony Express mail (but not the iconic Pony Express horse and rider) departed Atchison via the old “Parallel Road” (named for its location along the 1st Standard Parallel South), stopped at the stage station in Lancaster, Kansas, and continued on to Kennekuk, southeast of today’s Horton. At Kennekuk the stage intercepted the original “horse” Pony Express trail and continued along that road, still by coach, to Fort Kearny on the Platte River in Nebraska. No visible remains of original trail or related stations exist; station locales are marked by monuments.

Designation of this route would add about 22 new miles to the Pony Express National Historic Trail and to the National Trails System.

**13. Union Ferry (Union Town) Route.** This 41-mile route links the Big Springs area east of Topeka, Kansas, to the Independence Road at Rossville, Kansas. The route is under consideration for addition to the California, Oregon, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails.

**Route Description:** Emigrants heading west beyond Big Springs through Topeka needed to cross to the north side of the Kansas River, and they could do so in any of several places. If they took the north branch at the trail fork at Big Springs, keeping to the main Independence Road, they could cross at Papin’s Ferry (established in 1842 to serve the Santa Fe traders), which today is located in downtown Topeka. If they took the left branch, the Union Town Road, they could cross in the vicinity of Union Town and its sister settlement, Plowboy (Ellis 2014:213).

The Union Ferry study route branches off the Independence Road at Big Springs, which is near US 40 a mile east of the Shawnee/Douglas county line. The route runs southwesterly and west for about 9 miles. It then turns northwest, passing through Topeka, and continues toward the Potawatomi Baptist Mission. From the mission, one alternate of the Union Ferry Route goes north to cross the Kansas River at Smith’s Ferry and rejoins the Independence Road on the north side. A second alternate turns west from the Baptist Mission and continues along the south side of the river to the Union Town Ferry and the Union Town Ford, which are less than a mile apart. After crossing the river, the Union Ferry Route continues north 3 miles to Rossville and rejoins the Independence Road.

**Historical Assets:** Today, the Potawatomi Baptist Mission stands on the grounds of the Kansas State Historical Society on the east edge of Topeka. A wagon swale related to the Union Ferry Route still exists (D. Iles, personal communication, 02/05/2014), but periodic flooding has obliterated visible evidence of Smith’s Ferry and the Union Town Ferry and river ford. The original site of Union Town (also spelled Uniontown), founded in 1848 as a Potawatomi Indian Agency trading post, today is a historical

archeological site in its original rural setting. Residents of Union Town experienced several outbreaks of cholera before burning and abandoning the town site in 1859. The cholera victims are buried at a mass gravesite, believed to be situated in the central portion of a nearby cemetery. The Kansas River was designated as part of the National Water Trails System in 2012, and a boating/canoeing access ramp is proposed for the vicinity of Union Town (D. Iles, personal communication, 02/05/2014).

**Historical Summary:** In 1832, Frederick Chouteau opened a trading post near the mouth of Mission Creek on the south bank of the Kansas River, situated between two villages of Kanza Indian people led by Hard Chief and American Chief (Barry 1972:212, 248). From his post, about 10 miles west of Topeka, Chouteau traded with the Kanzas and hauled fur trade goods up the river in keel boats. By the end of the decade, the Mission Creek post was a crossroads for the fur trade, but Chouteau abandoned the site in 1842—just as it began to see the first trickle of overland emigrant traffic—in order to establish a new post elsewhere (Blackmar 1912:338).

Meanwhile, Hard Chief's village, known as Plowboy, became a focus for missionaries who established a short-lived manual-labor school there in 1845 (Morehouse 1908:347–348; Ellis 2014:215). In 1847, the US government began resettling the Citizen Band and Prairie Band Potawatomi Indians along the river in Kanza territory while simultaneously pushing the Kanzas onto a new reserve on the Neosho River (Murphy 1961:231; Mosteller 2013:45); thus, Plowboy transitioned from a Kanza village to a Potawatomi village. The following year, the federal government set up a trading post and Indian pay station about 5 miles west of Plowboy. This new post, Union Town, was meant to serve the reservation and to conduct business with emigrants crossing at the river ford a short distance upstream (Murphy 1961:241–241; Ellis 2014:218). The *St. Louis, Missouri, Republican* touted the ford as an excellent place for Oregon- and California-bound emigrants to cross to the north side of the Kansas River, and Captain L. C. Easton reported in 1849 that traders there were selling “Indian Goods and a variety of such Articles as Emigrants would probably require at this point” (Barry 1972:738). Union Town would be “the last major civilian center of commercial activity and supply” for people heading west on the Oregon and California trails (Ellis 2014:211).

But while travelers could readily ford the Kansas River at Union Town when the water was low, during times of high water they had to devise a makeshift ferry or stand by until water levels dropped. Seeing a business opportunity, Charles Beaubien and Lewis Ogee in 1849 opened a pole ferry across near the mouth of Cross Creek, just downstream from the Union Town ford (Root 1934:20). Another ferry, also at that location, evidently replaced, merged with, or took over the Beaubien-Ogee operation: Barry (1971:952) notes that a “Pottawatomie National Ferry” was established by government contract with Lucius R. Darling west of Union Town in July 1850. This operation, better known as Darling's Ferry, continued under various ownerships through the late 1860s (Root 1934:20).<sup>24</sup> In addition to those, Smith's Ferry, established by Sidney W. Smith about 6 miles west of Topeka between Union Town and Papin's Ferry at Topeka, competed for business between 1852 and 1860 (Cutler 1883; Root 1934:15; Barry 1972:1088). Of these several fords and ferries, Whitman and Searl's 1853 “Map of Eastern Kansas” shows only a crossing at Topeka that corresponds to Papin's Ferry and another above the Baptist Potawatomi Mission that corresponds to Smith's Ferry. Although the site of Union Town is labeled, no crossing is shown in that vicinity; nonetheless, Ellis (2014:212) identifies the Union Town crossing as “the busiest crossing of the Kansas River.”

In the spring and summer of 1849 and 1850, sick emigrants carried cholera to the area. Most white inhabitants of Union Town fled, burning down their buildings to destroy the scourge, but deaths among the nearby Potawatomis numbered in the hundreds. At least 22 of the victims are buried in a mass grave at the Union Town cemetery. The traders returned and rebuilt the town in 1851, and by 1854 Union Town “became a designated stop for almost every trail in northeast Kansas during the four years preceding the opening of Kansas Territory” (Corbin 2013). Once the territory was opened, however, homesteaders and businesses thronged to Topeka, cutting off Union Town's economic lifeblood. The

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<sup>24</sup> Ellis (2014:219) writes that Darling established his ferry in 1840, not 1849, and that Ogee was its operator.

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

post's death knell rang in 1858 with the closing of the Potawatomi Indian pay station, where the people of the reservation had collected their allotment payments (Corbin 2013; Ellis 2014:212–213). Emigrant use of all the Union Town crossings also declined as traffic from Independence and Westport shifted upriver to St. Joseph and Council Bluffs in the late 1840s and early 1850s (Evans-Hatch 2004a; Mattes 1969). By various means, the lands of the Potawatomis were largely sold off to white settlers. In the 1880s, the Citizen Band relocated to Oklahoma while the Prairie Band stayed in Kansas on a portion of their old reservation (Ellis 2014).

Barry (1972:795–796, 931–932), Mattes (1988), and Evans-Hatch (2004a) cite numerous historical records that document use of this route and these crossings by California-bound emigrants. Specifically, Evans-Hatch cite 16 California emigrants, but none who were bound for Oregon. A query of OCTA's COED database on "Union Town" and "Uniontown" identified 20 California records and one Oregon emigrant journal that mention those terms. The search could not distinguish between users of the ferry and users of the ford. Based on Mattes's (1988) rule-of-thumb ratio of 250 emigrants per record, an estimated 5,000 California-bound emigrants used the route. The volume of Oregon-bound traffic, on the other hand, is estimated at about 250 emigrants.

The NPS located no records in the LDS Church History pioneer database or the Mormon Trails Association website that demonstrate use of this route by LDS Church–organized emigrant parties.

**Conclusion:** In sum, 19th-century documentation suggests that up to 5,000 California emigrants and 250 Oregon emigrants used this route. The crossings at Union Town were established after the initial Oregon emigration of the early 1840s, and during the rush to Oregon in the early 1850s to claim land under the Land Donation Act, most Oregon-bound emigrants departed farther north from the Nebraska outfitting places. Thus, use of the crossing by Oregon-bound emigrants was understandably low. The NPS has located no documentation of use of the Union Ferry Route by Mormon emigrants. Historical assets of interest along this route include the Potawatomi Baptist Mission, the site of Union Town, and the historic Union Town cemetery.

Designation of this route would add approximately 41 new miles to the Oregon, California, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails and to the National Trails System.

**14. Road to Amazonia (Road from Amazonia).** This is a 9-mile route that links the Missouri River town of Amazonia, Missouri, to the St. Joe Road northeast of Troy, Kansas. This route is under consideration for addition to the California, Oregon, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails.

**Route Description:** Emigrants taking this road crossed the Missouri River from Amazonia, historically on the east bank of the river, to Kansas. From the western landing, the route goes southwest up Smith Creek for approximately 6 miles and then turns westerly for about 2 miles. It then turns southwest again to merge with the St. Joe Road about 4 miles northeast of Troy, Kansas.

**Historical Assets:** Agricultural and urban developments in and along the route of the road have obliterated physical evidence of the trail and its historic setting. Also, due to shifting of the Missouri River, part of the road that originally crossed the river bottoms in Kansas now lies in Missouri. No trail-related places of recreational or historical interest have been identified along the route.

**Historical Summary:** In 1842, an Ohio merchant named Charles Caples bought a large tract of land along the east bank of the Missouri River, some 9 miles upstream from St. Joseph, and platted a town he named Nodaway City. He quickly established a river landing and warehouse "from which he shipped large quantities of produce and hemp, and...received nearly if not quite all the merchandise for a number of inland towns of Northern Missouri and Southern Iowa" (Goodspeed 1888:172). His profitable activities soon attracted businessmen who offered to buy the town plat, but Caples refused to sell, holding out for a higher price in the belief that Nodaway City "promised to become the future metropolis of the Southwest" (Goodspeed 1888:172). The businessmen invested instead in St. Joseph, which they

helped develop into a booming, commercially diverse river town. Caples's town site, on the other hand, "in a few years ceased to be a place of any considerable importance, except as a shipping point in the river trade" (Goodspeed 1888:172). Caples Landing appeared in an 1846 Table of Distances for locales along the Missouri River, indicating that it had some continuing role in the shipping business (Barry 1972:502, 578).

In 1851, Nodaway City was renamed "Boston," and six years later, investors platted the adjacent town of Amazonia. The twin communities were located approximately 3 miles southwest of the larger community of Savannah, Missouri. Thus the river landing through time was known variously as Caples, Boston, Savannah, and Amazonia Landing (Werner 1988b).

Emigrants who crossed the Missouri River from Amazonia landed in Kansas and continued across a mile or two of river bottoms to the mouth of Smith Creek. Following the creek, they climbed onto the prairie and headed southwest to merge onto the St. Joe Road near Troy. The 1877 Historical Atlas of Andrew County, Missouri, published by Edwards Brothers of Philadelphia, depicts Amazonia on the east bank of the Missouri River as it was situated during the mid-19th century. Around 1885, however, the river changed course and stranded the town more than a mile from the active channel (Goodspeed 1888:178). Where the wagon trail once crossed a couple of miles of bottomlands on the Kansas side of the river, the route today transects verdant agricultural fields on the Missouri side.

The first known, documented use of a landing in this vicinity by Oregon or California emigrants crossing to Kansas was that of the Cornelius Gilliam family in 1844. Judging from the emigrant diaries that describe this road, traffic peaked in the 1840s, but overland use continued into the early 1850s. Evans-Hatch list six Oregon-bound emigrants who describe their experience traveling over the Road from Amazonia in the 1840s, and one more who was on his way to California. A query of OCTA's COED database for the terms "Bost," "Caples," "Savan," and "Amazonia" identified 16 records for parties bound for California, six for Oregon, and none for Utah. Based on Mattes's ratio of 250 emigrants per record, the Road from Amazonia was traveled by up to 4,000 California-bound emigrants and some 1,500 Oregon-bound emigrants. The NPS located no records in the LDS Church History pioneer database or the Mormon Trails Association website that demonstrate use of this route by LDS Church-organized emigrant parties.

**Conclusion:** In sum, 19th-century documentation for the Road from Amazonia suggests it was used in the 1840s and early 1850s by around 4,000 California and 1,500 Oregon emigrants, but it saw no use by church-organized Mormon emigrant parties. No places of historical or recreational interest have been identified along this route.

If designated, this route would add about 9 new miles to the Oregon, California, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails and to the National Trails System.

**15. St. Joe Road.** This is a 132-mile trail route between St. Joseph, Missouri, and a junction with the Independence Road eight and a half miles west of Marysville, Kansas. The St. Joe Road is already part of the designated California National Historic Trail, and several short segments also coincide with the Pony Express National Historic Trail. It is under consideration for addition to the Oregon and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails.

**Route Description:** The primary route of the St. Joe Road feasibility study route begins on the east bank of the Missouri River at the St. Joseph Riverfront Ferry Landing at the foot of Francis Street. An alternate route begins at the Belemont Ferry Landing on the west side of the river.

Most emigrants on this route crossed the Missouri River by ferry from the St. Joseph landing at the foot of Francis Street. Today the site locale is partially under the I-229 overpass, where the active channel of the Missouri flows along the lower edge of town as it did in the mid-19th century. Emigrants disembarked the ferry on the west bank at Elwood, Kansas, and followed the trail west across several

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

miles of timbered bottomland. At Wathena, the trail climbed a bluff and ascended Peters Creek for about a mile before turning north along a ridge. In another mile, emigrant traffic merged with wagons coming from the Belemont Ferry.

The Belemont Ferry operated 4 miles upstream from the St. Joseph Ferry. To reach the eastern landing and the active channel of the river, emigrants departing Missouri first had to cross 4 miles of bottomlands. (Since the mid-19th century, the river has shifted and cut off the old meander channel where the Belemont Ferry crossed, so today the old landing site is on dry land about 3 miles from the river.) After landing on the Kansas side, emigrants climbed a steep trail (today a gravel road) to the top of the bluff. Emigrant traffic then continued a mile west to join the trail coming from Wathena.

From the junction of the two alternates, the study route turns north-northwest and follows a ridge for 4 miles, where it is joined by the emigrant road from Amazonia. It next turns west toward Wolf River and from there follows a sinuous route past the Iowa, Sac, and Fox Presbyterian Mission located 2 miles east of today's Highland, Kansas.

From Highland, the study route goes west 15 miles to Hiawatha, curves south around the head of Walnut Creek, and passes through Fairview, Sabetha, and Bern to reach the Nemaha River crossing. Keeping to ridge tops, the route dips south and then north over 9 miles to Clear Creek, where visible swales descend to the creek crossing. It continues west for about 15 miles before turning southwest toward Marysville. There the route swings west to cross the Big Blue River at the Marshall's Ferry site. The route continues northwest from there for another eight and a half miles to join the Independence Road on a ridge near the head of Mountain Creek.

**Historical Assets:** The St. Joe Road crosses miles of open country, much of which retains its natural, rural character. No traces of the ferry landings remain. At the Iowa, Sac, and Fox Presbyterian Mission site, a prominent feature on the St. Joe Road, there still stands an original mission building that was constructed in 1845–1846. Though access requires private landowner permission, deep wagon swales (formally determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register) are visible at Clear Creek, and the rock ledge used by wagon traffic can still be seen at the Nemaha River crossing. National Register-listed wagon ruts known as the Pacha Ruts, located on private property near Bremen, are part of the old St. Joe Road. Several emigrant gravesites are located on private property along the route. An original Pony Express building from 1860 still stands in Marysville. The Marshall's Ferry site at the Big Blue River near Marysville is interpreted off-site at Historic Trails Park, which has a replica ferry.

**Historical Summary:** In the late summer of 1843, the year of St. Joseph's founding, Cornelius Gilliam advertised that he would lead an emigrant party to Oregon the following spring. Gilliam crossed his extended family over the Missouri River in the vicinity of Amazonia, Missouri, in early March 1844 and camped on the Kansas side for two months as other emigrants gathered at the meeting place. When the company finally set out across the prairie on May 9, it comprised 323 emigrants, 72 wagons, 713 cattle, and nearly 100 horses and mules. More emigrants were on the way to join them. Over two unusually wet months, Gilliam's party blazed a new route "across a trackless country" between the Missouri and Big Blue rivers (Gilliam 1904:202). Along the way, the emigrants battled constant rain (with only eight drizzle-free days), mud, and flood-level streams that forced the wagons to detour around entire drainages. Once across the Big Blue River, the party merged onto the Independence Road. Subsequent emigrants and military expeditions (including Stephen Kearny's 1845 dragoon expedition) adjusted Gilliam's route to avoid difficult terrain and eliminate the wet-year detours, and the final route, known as the St. Joe Road, was mapped by about 1850 (Barry 1972: 593, 508, 1294; Werner 1991).

Meanwhile, in 1847 a local newspaper reported that 800 emigrants had departed from St. Joseph, and the count climbed rapidly over the next several years as the California gold rush began. In 1849, St. Joseph became the primary jumping-off place for gold-rushers, overtaking Independence and Westport/Kansas City (Mattes 1969:104). Ferry boats running day and night could not accommodate the crowds, and emigrants often were forced to wait four or five days, jostling for a place at the front of the pack, for their turn. A local source in 1850 claimed that nearly 32,000 people had started west from



St. Joseph that year (Hudson 1981; also see Barry 1972). St. Joe was nearly that busy in 1852, but Council Bluffs became the primary departure point for the overall emigration, largely due to the large Mormon companies leaving Kanesville/Council Bluffs (Mattes 1969:104; Andersen 2009c).

“By the late 1850s,” writes Mattes (1969:105), “lower fares and technical improvements in steamboat transportation to Nebraska points, combined with a saving of 200 miles of land transportation, led to a sharp decline of covered wagon traffic out of St. Joe and Kansas City.” The 1849 opening of the Cherokee Trail out of Oklahoma provided a better route for emigrants originating in the South, and the Kansas-Missouri border troubles of the mid- to late 1850s and the destruction of St. Joseph in the early months of the Civil War ended most emigration through that town.

At least 450 emigrant narratives that describe the road have been located to date. According to Mattes (1988), Oregon-bound diarists dominate the written record between 1844 and 1848. Between 1849 and 1850, California-bound Argonauts flooded the road and produced the largest volume of narratives. For the next 15 years, a relatively equal number of Oregon and California emigrants created a written record of their journey by this route. This mass of humanity and their wagons turned the St. Joe Road into a broad corridor of numerous parallel wagon tracks (Evans-Hatch 2004a; also see Lewin and Taylor 1992).

Mattes (1988) lists 87 records for Oregon-bound parties departing from St. Joseph. A query of OCTA’s COED database to identify records of Oregon-bound emigrants with a St. Joseph departure and mentions of “Wolf” (River) and “presby” (Iowa, Sac, and Fox Presbyterian Mission) yielded 24 records. Of these, 10 were unknown to Mattes. Using a total of 97 records and employing Mattes’s ratio of 250 emigrants per record, an estimated 24,250 emigrants traveled the St. Joe Road to Oregon.

The St. Joe Road also was used by a small, documented number of LDS emigrants. Thomas Rhoads took a Mormon party consisting of his extended family and 10 wagons across the Missouri River at St. Joseph in May 1846. The party, responding to Brigham Young’s call for all of the Saints to gather in the West, was traveling independently and evidently hoped to meet up with other Mormon emigrants on the trail. Near the junction of the Independence and St. Joe roads, the Rhoads party joined a California-bound company and continued west with them, reaching Fort Laramie approximately three weeks before the Mississippi Saints arrived. Rhoads, not knowing the whereabouts of either Young’s party or the Mississippi Saints, waited there for a week or two, hoping the others would show up. Finally, nervous about the possibility of having to winter at Fort Laramie, the Rhoads party continued west. They reached California in October and settled in Sacramento, where some members of the family participated in attempts to rescue the Donner Party that winter (Davies 1983). Thus, their ultimate destination on this journey was California, although some of the party later migrated east to Utah.

At least one Mormon emigrant company that camped at Salt Creek outside of Fort Leavenworth in 1854 likely joined the St. Joe Road via the Fort Leavenworth-Fort Kearny Road (Fort Leavenworth-Big Blue River study route). The journals of Robert Hodgert and Isaac Groo, of the 63-member William Field Company, note the company’s departure from their Salt Creek encampment, their arrival at the St. Joe Road, and their crossing of the Big Blue River. In addition, Kimball (1980) identifies St. Joseph as a departure point for a company of Mormon emigrants in 1859. However, instead of starting overland from that town, this company arrived by train and directly boarded a riverboat from St. Joseph to Florence (Omaha), where they were to outfit for their handcart trek to Utah (Carter 1960). This party did not travel the St. Joe Road. Therefore, the total known Mormon emigration that headed overland from St. Joseph is estimated at fewer than 70 persons.

**Conclusion:** In sum, upwards of 21,750 Oregon-bound emigrants traveled the St. Joe Road, primarily through the 1840s and early 1850s. Documented Mormon use of the road consists of fewer than 70 emigrants. Numerous trail-related properties of historical interest, including trail swale, graves, and an original Pony Express building, exist along the route.

Recognition of this route for the Mormon Pioneer and/or Oregon national historic trails would add 132 miles to those trails but no new miles to the National Trails System, as it is already designated for the

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

California and Pony Express national historic trails.

**16. Pony Express Trail from Wathena, Kansas, to Troy, Kansas.** This 8.5-mile route runs parallel to the existing, designated Pony Express National Historic Trail, and is thought to have served as an alternate Pony Express route for use during rainy seasons. It is under consideration for addition to the Pony Express National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** The Pony Express mail relay operated between St. Joseph, Missouri, and San Francisco, California, from April 1860 to mid-September 1861. An eastern section of the trail traversed the Kansas prairie between the villages of Wathena and Troy, Kansas.

The current congressionally designated route of the Pony Express National Historic Trail follows Peters Creek northwesterly from Wathena and enters Troy directly from the east. It jogs south through town and continues generally in a southwesterly direction toward the village of Denton. This trail is mentioned as a stage and mail route in newspaper accounts from early 1860.

The Wathena to Troy feasibility study route, on the other hand, runs due west out of Wathena, roughly parallel to and about a mile south of the designated Pony Express Trail. Despite its name, this route does not actually enter Troy but passes south of town. It connects with the designated Pony Express Trail a short distance southwest of Troy. This route appears on an 1855 survey map, where it is labeled as the Pottawatomie Road.

**Historical Assets:** Much of the route crosses croplands; west of Troy the old Pottawatomie Road runs near a railroad grade for less than a mile. No remnants of the historic road are known to exist.

**Historical Summary:** Researchers agree that both the Peters Creek road and the Pottawatomie Road existed during the Pony Express period and that the designated Pony Express National Historic Trail, the northern route, was routinely used by the Pony Express. They disagree, however, on whether the Pony Express also periodically used the southern route, the Pottawatomie Road, which is under consideration here for possible designation. The argument that it was so used derives primarily from four sources.

The first source is British explorer Richard Burton, who in his travelogue, *City of the Saints*, described his stagecoach trip from St. Joseph to Salt Lake City in 1860. Burton departed St. Joseph in a Concord mail coach, which was ferried across the Missouri River to Elwood, Kansas. From there the stage climbed the bluff to Wathena and continued west through Troy to the Cold Springs stage and mail station located at Syracuse, Kansas.

Burton noted that two routes existed between St. Joseph (Elwood) and Cold Springs Station, one 20 miles and the other 24 miles in length. The shorter southern route is the Pottawatomie Road; but Burton specified that his coach took the northern route, today's designated Pony Express NHT, in order to avoid "rough ground and bad bridges" on the southern alternate (Burton 1862:18). He did not mention the Pony Express in connection with either route. Some researchers have since reasoned that the Pony Express would have used the southern road, which is the study route, because it was (according to their understanding of Burton) 4 miles shorter than the northern stage road.

But in a March 12, 2003, letter to the Doniphan County Historical Society, Nardone reported that measurements of the two routes show that the difference in length, in fact, is less than a mile. Further, the northern road taken by Burton was used by the Central Overland California & Pikes Peak Express, the parent company to the Pony Express, to deliver regular mail by stagecoach to Salt Lake City. Some researchers infer that the Pony Express would have followed the same route, particularly if it were a better road.

A second source concerning use of the Pottawatomie Road by the Pony Express is a 1923 *St. Joseph Gazette* article about the historic mail relay. The article cites a Mr. J. J. Baker, who said he was sure the Pony Express did not always follow the northern trail through Troy "but a part of the time followed the

Pottawatomie Road farther south.” Depending on his age at the time of the newspaper interview, Baker could have been a primary source who witnessed the Pony Express firsthand as a child, or he might have been speculating or relating local lore.

Third, a 1959 article on the Pony Express published in the *Kansas Historical Quarterly* (no author is listed) provides a table of the route of the Pony Express through Kansas, showing Troy as a possible relay station. The article observes, “Apparently there were two routes between Elwood and Cold Spring, one being 20 miles long, the other 24. The latter was through Troy. It is not certain which route was most used” (Kansas State Historical Society 1959:370). The two routes referenced are those described by Burton. The article does not explain why its author concluded that both routes were used by the Pony Express, but it is sometimes cited by other researchers as evidence that both were used.

The fourth and most recent source, as reported by trail historians Merrill J. Mattes and Paul Henderson (1989), was John Ellenbecker, a resident of Marysville, Kansas, who was chairman of The American Pioneer Trails Association of Kansas in the 1940s and author of a book about the “Lost ‘49ers” of Death Valley. Ellenbecker told Mattes and Henderson that Pony Express riders used the Pottawatomie Road between Wathena and Troy. Mattes and Henderson, widely respected trail historians, did not indicate that he made any mention of the northern trail through Troy. However, in connection with this feasibility study, more recent researchers explained that Ellenbecker had related to others that Pony Express riders used the Pottawatomie Road during the rainy season and the northern route at drier times (A. Martin, personal communication, 2011).

The Pottawatomie Road was the earlier of the two roads, appearing on a survey map of the area in 1855, a year before the village of Troy was established. It passed south of the future Troy town site, not through it. However, two 1860 newspaper accounts establish that by April 1860, when the Pony Express started its first run from St. Joseph, the main travel route from Wathena to Cold Springs was the northern road that passed through Troy (*Elwood Free Press*, 28 Jan. 1860; *St. Joseph Weekly Free Democrat*, 24 March 1860); and a March 1861 US Postmaster schedule and an October 1861 Pony Express company schedule both list a Pony Express station there. The Troy Pony Express mail and Overland Stage station known as Thompson’s was located on the main (northern) road. The journal of an 1861 stagecoach passenger, I. J. Benjamin, places Thompson’s on the northern route about a mile east of Troy; and a 1938 autobiographical sketch of James R. Burton, who was born in 1860 at the Thompson farm, states that Thompson’s was “the first stop west of St. Joseph, Missouri, on the old Pony Express line” (Burton 1938). Finally, Nardone has copies of mid-19th-century legal documents confirming that the Thompson farm/station was located about a mile east of Troy on the northern trail from Wathena, as Benjamin’s journal reported.<sup>25</sup>

Researchers also differ concerning the identification of Cottonwood Springs, located on the Pottawatomie Road about a mile south of Troy, as a Pony Express station site. Tradition holds that it was a station locale, but no 19th-century documentation has been brought forward to confirm it was used as such by the Pony Express, and some historians appear to have confused Cottonwood with Thompson’s Station.

**Conclusion:** In sum, the NPS is unaware of any primary source documentation that demonstrates either regular or intermittent use of the Pottawatomie Road by the Pony Express; but neither does information at hand conclusively rule out the possibility that the Pony Express occasionally used the route as an alternate. Since no 19th-century documentation shows such use, however, one may conclude that travel by the Pony Express along the study route would have been infrequent and intermittent. No

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<sup>25</sup> Joe Nardone has provided copies of the following documentation, which are on file with the NPS in Salt Lake City: a letter from Nardone to Doniphan County Historical Society; “Exhibit 1,” a biographical sketch of James Burton; “Exhibit 2a,” probate order concerning disposition of the Thompson Farm; and “Exhibit 3,” Bird’s Doniphan County Plat Book, 1882.

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

identified trail-related places of recreational or specific historical interest have been identified along the route.

Designation of this route would add about 8.5 miles to the Pony Express National Historic Trail and to the National Trails System.

**17. Minersville-Nebraska City Road.** This study route links Minersville, Nebraska, on the west bank of the Missouri River, to Nebraska City, about 8 miles upriver. It is under consideration for addition to the California and Oregon national historic trails.

**Route Description:** The Minersville-Nebraska City Road study route begins at Minersville, on the west side of the Missouri River, and runs northwesterly for 7 miles to Nebraska City. From there, travelers could follow the Oxbow Trail or Nebraska City Cutoff routes west to join the South-side Platte River Corridor.

**Historical Assets:** Minersville, Nebraska, has been abandoned. No buildings or trail remnants from the emigration era are known to survive.

**Historical Summary:** Minersville is located in Otoe County in eastern Nebraska, about 7 miles down the Missouri River from Nebraska City. The town was established in 1856 as Bennett's Ferry, named for the operator of a ferry at this location. It was renamed Otoe City the following year, and again renamed Minersville (for the area's coal mines) in 1874. Nearby Nebraska City was a major outfitting town and headquarters of the firm of Russell, Majors & Waddell, which operated a freighting business to transport goods and supplies along the western trails.

Evans-Hatch (2004a) report that an 1857 government survey map of Nebraska Territory depicts a road running northwest for about 7 miles between Bennett's Ferry and Nebraska City. They speculate that emigrants could have crossed the Missouri River aboard Bennett's Ferry, landed on the west bank, and followed the road to Nebraska City; however, it is unclear why travelers would choose to do that when they might simply debark at Nebraska City instead, saving a two- to three-hour drive. Evans-Hatch do not cite any emigrants known to have landed at Minersville, and a query of OCTA's COED database for Old Fort Kearny/Nebraska City jump-offs turned up only one California record and no Oregon records that mention the Bennett's Ferry crossing.

**Conclusion:** In sum, the Minersville-Nebraska City Road is indisputably a historic road dating to the emigration period, but 19th-century documentation points to negligible use, if any, of the route by California- or Oregon-bound emigrants (Evans-Hatch 2004a; Dudley 2012). No trail-related places of recreational or historical interest have been identified along this route.

If designated, this route would add about 8 new miles to the Oregon and California national historic trails and to the National Trails System.

**18. Old Fort Kearny Road (Oxbow Trail).** This 263.5-mile route begins in Nebraska City, Nebraska, and follows the south side of the Platte River to a junction with the Independence Road. The junction is located about 10 miles east of Fort Kearny and on the opposite side of the river from the town of Gibbon, Nebraska. Except for a 5.5-mile new study variant that extends to Shinn's Ferry, the entire Oxbow Trail is already part of the designated California National Historic Trail.

The route is named twice in the feasibility study legislation, once as "Old Fort Kearny Road (Oxbow Trail)" for study as a shared California and Oregon trail route, and again as the "Ox Bow route" for study as part of the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail. For the sake of consistency and historical accuracy, in the event that the route is added to the Oregon and/or Mormon Pioneer national historic trails, it should be designated as the Oxbow Trail.

**Route Description:** From Nebraska City, the Oxbow Trail study route is coincident with the first 6 miles of the 1862 branch of the Nebraska City Cutoff. The route then branches off northwest toward Goose Creek and follows ridges for approximately 20 miles. Four miles east of Elmwood, Nebraska, another study route, the Woodbury Cutoff, branches off to the west. The route continues north-northwesterly past Murdock to Ashland, Nebraska, where it crosses Salt Creek.

From Saline Ford, the study route runs northwesterly for approximately 20 miles along ridges between watercourses, crossing the modern alignment of US 77 at Swedeburg, Nebraska. It follows a winding, northwest-trending route along ridgetops for 20 miles to a divide between the North Oak Creek and Wahoo Creek drainages, about 15 miles west of Wahoo, Nebraska.

- a. At the headwaters of Skull Creek, an alternate route branches off to the north toward the Platte River.
  - i. The primary route of the Oxbow Trail turns west toward Brainard, Nebraska, and continues northwesterly past David City to Deer Creek, southwest of Bellwood.
  - ii. The alternate runs due north for 15 miles. Near the town Linwood, Nebraska, it turns west, approaches the Platte River about 2 miles east of NE-15, and then follows the river for approximately 5 miles. Along this riverside stretch are spur routes to two ferry crossings, both known as Shinn's Ferry. The alternate then curves southwest away from the Platte and rejoins the main Oxbow Trail at Deer Creek.

Now the study route goes west about 29 miles to the Platte River. It follows the south bank of the Platte for 6 miles and crosses NE-92. Continuing southwest, the trail passes north of Marquette, where a private landowner has documented a remnant of the trail. In another 23 miles, the route arrives at a trail junction near I-80, where the Nebraska City Cutoff routes come in from the east. Still following the river, the Oxbow Trail meets up with several strands of the Independence Road between Denman, Nebraska, and NE-10, where the study route ends. Emigrants proceeded west on the South-side Platte River Corridor.

**Historical Assets:** Much of the land this route traverses across eastern Nebraska has been used for agricultural purposes for the past several decades. Nearly all visible trace of the original trail is gone, although in a few places the topography suggests its alignment. At the trail's head, the Nebraska City Complex includes the old ferry landing and the Old Freighters Museum, which was headquarters for the freighting firm of Russell, Majors & Waddell. Saline Ford at Ashland still bears some traces of wagon traffic and today is an interpreted site at a town park. Trail remnants are located on private property north of Marquette.

**Historical Summary:** The original Fort Kearny was established in 1846 near the mouth of Table Creek on the Missouri River, at present-day Nebraska City. The site was selected because it was the closest place on the Missouri River to the point where the Independence Road meets the Platte River. From Table Creek, troops could be supplied by steamboat and still be within striking distance of the Oregon Trail, which they were assigned to protect (Mattes 1969).

It soon became apparent, however, that "the place for a fort was where the covered wagons were, at the point of their convergence with the Platte, not some hypothetical point on the Missouri River" (Mattes 1969:118). The War Department therefore ordered that the post be relocated farther west near the Platte River's Grand Island. Once the Platte River fort was completed in 1848, it became the "new" Fort Kearny, and the original fort became known as Old Fort Kearny.

However, the military still maintained a presence at the original locale, which "continued to be a focal point of military as well as emigrant debarkation" (Mattes 1969:118-119). Old Fort Kearny was a particularly popular jumping-off place for gold-seekers heading to California in 1849-1852. Quite a few emigrants drove up the east side of the Missouri River from St. Joseph and then crossed to Old Fort Kearny by ferry, while those who could afford to pay passage arrived by Missouri River steamboat (Mattes 1969:117-118). Old Fort Kearny/Nebraska City was about 40 miles farther west than the lower

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Missouri River jumping-off places, and that as well as its more northern location saved weeks of travel across the prairie.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act opened the former Indian lands to settlement in 1854, and Nebraska City was incorporated at the site of Old Fort Kearny the following year. The new town flourished as a freighting center to supply the US Army's western forts and as a point of departure to the Colorado mines in 1859 (Mattes 1969).

Through 1859, all emigrant companies, military convoys, and commercial wagon trains heading west from Old Fort Kearny/Nebraska City followed the Oxbow Trail. The route could be problematic, though, because much of it traversed the Platte River bottoms, which were impassable for the heavy freight wagons under wet conditions (Olson and Naugle 1997:106). Starting in 1860, the developing Nebraska City Cutoff offered more direct and more dependable routes from Old Fort Kearny/Nebraska City to the South-side Platte River Corridor. For the purposes of this study, then, 1860 is considered the end-date for use of the Oxbow route by the Oregon and California emigrations.

Mattes (1988) identifies six Oregon-bound emigrant parties that departed from Old Fort Kearny/Nebraska City before 1860. A query of OCTA's COED database identified an additional four records for Oregon-bound emigrant parties who departed from Old Fort Kearny/Nebraska City before 1860, for a total of nine records. All of these records happen to relate to travel between 1850 and 1853, before the Nebraska City Cutoff routes had been developed. Mattes's ratio of 250 emigrants per record, then, indicates that an estimated 2,250 travelers departed from Old Fort Kearny/Nebraska City for Oregon via the Oxbow road.

Mattes (1988) shows seven Utah-bound parties that left from Old Fort Kearny/Nebraska City, but none were Mormon emigrants. The COED query also identified some Utah-bound parties who departed Old Fort Kearny, but the only Mormons of record to have done so were Howard Egan's 64-member company in 1849.<sup>26, 27</sup> Other than that company, which evidently was carrying mail and/or commercial freight as well as conveying emigrants, the LDS Church History pioneer database and other Mormon Trail researchers indicate that very few, if any, Utah-bound Mormon emigrants debarked at Old Fort Kearny.

**Conclusion:** In sum, the Oxbow Trail was in popular use, primarily by the military and commercial freighters, between 1846 and 1860. Based on known records dating between 1850 and 1853, an estimated 2,250 Oregon-bound emigrants traveled the Oxbow Trail in the early years of that decade. Howard Egan's party of 64 members is the only documented Mormon company to have departed from Old Fort Kearny and traveled the Oxbow Trail. Several trail-related places of historical interest, including original trail trace and a wagon ford, are found along the route.

This study route is 263.5 miles long, of which 258 miles already are designated as part of the California National Historic Trail. Further designation of the Oxbow Trail and its Shinn's Ferry spurs to the Oregon and/or Mormon Pioneer national historic trails would add 263.5 miles each to those NHTs and 5.5 new miles to the National Trails System.

**19. Nebraska City Cutoff Routes.** These routes consist of several braided trails running west from Nebraska City, Nebraska, to join the Old Fort Kearny Road/Oxbow Trail (described above) 3 miles northeast of Doniphan, Nebraska. The cutoff routes, totaling about 305.5 miles in length, share 29.5 miles with the Oxbow Trail route of the California National Historic Trail. They are under consideration for addition to the Oregon, California, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails.

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<sup>26</sup> According to Mormon Trail researcher Gail Holmes, the few other LDS travelers who went west from Nebraska City were mostly employed as teamsters by the Nebraska City freighting companies.

<sup>27</sup> The Mormon Trails Association website indicates that about 5,000 Mormon emigrants traveled the "Oxbow Variant," but the route described there is not the Oxbow Trail feasibility study route. Rather, it appears to be one or both of the Plattsmouth routes, which are described elsewhere in this document.

**Route Description:** Three interwoven branches of trail known as the Nebraska City Cutoff routes were developed in consecutive years between 1860 and 1862 from Nebraska City to Fort Kearny. They all begin in downtown Nebraska City, above the confluence of South Table Creek with the Missouri River. From that point, the cutoff splits into two branches on either side of South Table Creek.

- a. The southern branch (1860–1861) runs west through Syracuse, Nebraska, to a crossing of the Little Nemaha River. About two and a half miles west of the crossing, the trail forks again.
  - i. The 1860 branch continues west and descends to Salt Creek, 1 mile northwest of Roca, Nebraska. No visible trail trace remains. The trail continues 5 miles northwest of the creek to its junction with the 1861 branch.
  - ii. The 1861 branch arcs northwesterly, recrosses the Little Nemaha near today's town of Palmyra, and fords Salt Creek 2 miles north of the 1861 creek crossing. Deep wagon swales, known as the Saltillo Swales (named after a nearby town), are still visible along this descent.

The combined 1860–1861 route continues west and crosses the Big Blue River before turning northwesterly to parallel the West Fork of the Big Blue. Three miles east of today's Beaver Crossing, near Walnut Creek, the 1860–1861 variant of the Nebraska City Cutoff meets the 1862 variant.

- b. The northern branch (1862) starts at Nebraska City on the north side of South Table Creek. It heads west, paralleling the 1860–1861 variant, to the vicinity of Syracuse, Nebraska. From there the route angles northwest and passes through the Cottage View suburb of today's Lincoln, Nebraska. It continues west, crosses the Big Blue River near the town of Milford, and runs another 9 miles to the junction with the 1860–1861 branch near Walnut Creek.

From here the study route continues as a single corridor, heading westerly for about 20 miles to today's York, Nebraska. It next follows the Beaver Creek drainage for about 39 miles to its junction with the Old Fort Kearny Road/Oxbow Trail near I-80, south of Grand Island, Nebraska. From there, emigrants could follow the Old Fort Kearny Road/Oxbow Trail southwest for about 30 miles to join the South-side Platte River Corridor (also part of the Mississippi Saints route) south of Gibbon, Nebraska.

**Historical Assets:** The Nebraska City Complex includes the river landing site and the Old Freighters Museum, which was headquarters for the freighting firm of Russell, Majors & Waddell. The location where an experimental steam wagon broke down is marked with a stone monument. Several wagon fords, some with evidence of wagon use, as well as road ranch sites and wagon swales exist on private lands along the routes. The Saltillo Swales, on public land near the community of Saltillo (1861 route), are a dramatic set of wagon swales that wind through woodland. About 9 miles west of Salt Creek, multiple sets of swales can be seen descending from the ridge tops to Spring Creek. These ruts are located at the Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center, an 808-acre natural prairie preserve 3 miles south of Denton. The Haines Creek Cottonwood, an enormous tree that is believed to date to the emigrant era, still flourishes along the trail route about 3 miles southwest of Denton and about a mile west of the Spring Creek Prairie ruts, on the 1862 route.

**Historical Summary:** In 1857, the freighting firm of Russell, Majors & Waddell won a government contract to supply Albert Sidney Johnston's Army of Utah. The firm selected Nebraska City as its outfitting headquarters for that operation, with an understanding that the city would develop a new, direct road to Fort Kearny. The new road would bypass the old Oxbow Trail, which was indirect and traversed river bottoms where heavy wagons often became mired in the mud. Counting on the city to keep its end of the bargain, Russell invested more than \$300,000 to develop land and facilities, purchased 16,000 yoke of oxen, and hired 1,500 men (Olson and Naugle 1997:106).

However, Nebraska City's promised road never materialized. In the spring of 1860, after several years of waiting, Alexander Majors hired August Harvey, Nebraska City's engineer, to blaze a direct trail to the Platte River. Strong tradition holds that Harvey and his assistants marked the way west from Saltillo to Fort Kearny using a mule-drawn breaking plow to turn a 180-mile furrow (e.g., Olson and Naugle 1997; Doyle 2004). Russell, Majors & Waddell's freight wagons soon rumbled west astraddle the furrow and

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by the end of the season had established a well-defined wagon road that avoided the river bottoms and saved 56 miles over the Oxbow Trail. Emigrant wagons joined the freight traffic, and numerous road ranches sprang up along the route to provide freighters and other travelers with lodging and meals (Olson and Naugle 1997).

This original 1860 branch of the Nebraska City Cutoff was used through at least 1866, and Mormon “down and back” trains heading west from Old Wyoming, Nebraska, likely followed the original cutoff in 1864–1866 (Murphy 2010).<sup>28</sup>

Travelers seeking to improve the route soon created two more variants of the cutoff. The NPS has located no information concerning development of the 1861 variant. The northern branch, developed in 1862, is better known because of a whimsical bit of history associated with it.

According to the *Nebraska Blue Book* (Nebraska 1930), this route was developed by Otoe County for testing a new steam locomotive designed to haul freight, without rails, to Denver. The enormous automated wagon, powered by four 10-horsepower steam engines, was designed and manufactured by engineer John Reed and shipped from New York to Nebraska City in July 1862. Engineers hitched it to three large freight wagons containing 5 tons of freight and three cords of wood (for fuel), and set out along the new road toward Denver. A few miles out of Nebraska City, though, one of the engine’s drive shafts broke and the steam wagon hissed to a halt (Oldham 1996). The location where it broke down is marked with a monument and the road is still known as the Steam Wagon Road.

The steam wagon was hauled back to Nebraska City, eventually to be abandoned at today’s Arbor Lodge. Some 30 years later, the rusting heap was disassembled and parted out. One of the machine’s cylinders is exhibited at the Old Freighters Museum in Nebraska City (Oldham 1996).

Ultimately, however, the failed experiment did inspire important improvements to the trail. Otoe County, looking forward to the successful repair of the locomotive and establishment of a new, steam-powered freight line, spent some \$2,500 to build new bridges and improve the road all the way to Fort Kearny.

Emigrants destined for Oregon and California used the Nebraska City Cutoff routes primarily between 1860 and 1866, the latter year being “the last significant year of civilian travel by wagon up the Platte River” (Mattes 1969:21) due to the westerly progress of the transcontinental railroad. A query of OCTA’s COED database for “Old Fort Kearny/Nebraska City” as the point of departure identified 15 records for California emigrants and 8 for Oregon emigrants who jumped off from Nebraska City/Old Fort Kearny during or after 1860, when the initial cutoff was established. These emigrants are assumed to have preferred one of the shorter cutoffs over the original Oxbow Trail. Based on Mattes’s ratio of 250 emigrants per record, then, the Nebraska City Cutoff routes combined carried an estimated 3,750 California-bound emigrants and 2,000 Oregon-bound emigrants. Among them was frontier photographer and artist William Henry Jackson, who traveled the Steam Wagon Road in 1866 when he started west working as a bullwhacker for a freighting outfit.

In 1864, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints moved its outfitting post from Florence (Winter Quarters/Omaha) to the original, “old” town of Wyoming, Nebraska, and began running “down and back” wagon trains between Salt Lake City and that location on the Missouri River. Because provisions at the jumping-off towns had become prohibitively expensive, eastbound “down” wagons were sent from Salt Lake City loaded with locally grown food to be dropped off at supply depots along the way to the Missouri River outfitting camps. From the Missouri River, the trains (now heading “back”) hauled freight and assisted Mormon emigrants west along the trail. Emigrants who outfitted at Wyoming, Nebraska, traveled a short connector trail to join the Nebraska City Cutoff routes to the main trail corridor up the Platte River. According to Mormon Trail historian Stanley Kimball (1991a:73), in 1867 the Mormons abandoned the Nebraska City Cutoff and rode the rails west from the Missouri River to North Platte,

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<sup>28</sup> The original settlement of Wyoming, Nebraska, was abandoned around 1870, and a second town site, also named Wyoming, was established. The original town has long been known as “Old Wyoming.”



Nebraska, where they joined LDS Church-sponsored wagon trains to Salt Lake City. In subsequent years, the LDS Church continued this practice, gradually moving the emigrant jump-off point farther west as construction of the Union Pacific Railroad progressed.

A September 5, 1868, item in the *Nebraska Commonwealth* newspaper, published in Lincoln, noted the presence of Mormon graves along one of the cutoff routes between Nebraska City and Lincoln. Approximately 7,000 Mormon emigrants traveled one or more of the cutoff variants between 1864 and 1866 (Andersen 2009d).

The Nebraska City Cutoff routes contributed to rapid settlement and commercial development south of the Platte River. These routes also were heavily used by commercial freighters hauling goods and supplies to Denver. After 1866, when the transcontinental railroad traversed Nebraska, the road's importance for emigration and freighting significantly waned (Mattes 1969).

**Conclusion:** In sum, an estimated 3,750 California-bound emigrants and some 2,000 Oregon-bound emigrants traveled the Nebraska City Cutoff routes west between 1860 and 1866. In addition, some 7,000 Mormon emigrants used the cutoff routes, many of them traveling as members of the LDS Church's innovative "down and back" wagon trains between 1864 and 1866. Several places of historical interest, including wagon swales, water crossings, and the archeological remains of road ranch sites, are located along the three variants of the Nebraska City Cutoff.

The three variants of this route combined total 305.5 miles in length. Of these, 29.5 miles are already designated as part of the California National Historic Trail. If all three variants of this route are designated as described, about 276 new miles would be added to the California National Historic Trail and to the National Trails System. The Oregon and Mormon Pioneer NHTs would be expanded by 305.5 miles each.

**20. Woodbury Cutoff.** This is a 66.5-mile alternate of the Old Fort Kearny Road/Oxbow Trail in east-central Nebraska. It branches off of the Old Fort Kearny Road/Oxbow Trail about 24 miles west of Nebraska City and rejoins the same trail a mile and a half north of Brainard, Nebraska. This route is under consideration for addition to the California, Oregon, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails.

**Route Description:** The Woodbury Cutoff study route forks off the Old Fort Kearny Road/Oxbow Trail 4 miles east of Elmwood, Nebraska. It runs south of Elmwood and trends northwesterly, continuing past Waverly and crossing I-80 and US 6 northeast of Lincoln, Nebraska. The route then crosses Salt Creek, continues 32 miles to Brainard, Nebraska, and rejoins the Old Fort Kearny Road/Oxbow Trail a mile and a half north of town. The Woodbury Cutoff study route is approximately 66 miles long.

**Historical Assets:** The Upper Oak Creek Descent Ruts, which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Woodbury Cutoff of the Oxbow Trail, are located on private property several miles southeast of Brainard, Nebraska. They descend about a quarter-mile across a rare section of hilly, unplowed prairie.

**Historical Summary:** In 1847, Lt. Daniel Woodbury and about 70 Missouri Riflemen headed out from the original Fort Kearny, at the confluence of Table Creek and the Missouri River, to scout a new location for the fort in the vicinity of Grand Island on the Platte River. Woodbury took a direct route to the area and identified an appropriate new site near today's town of Kearney, Nebraska. On his return to Table Creek, he plotted a different route, roughly parallel to the Old Fort Kearny Road/Oxbow Trail, which seemed more suitable for wagon travel to the site of the new Fort Kearny. This route became known as the Woodbury Cutoff.

The Woodbury Cutoff served primarily as a freight and government supply road, but it also experienced use by emigrants. Because the trail post-dated the initial 1843 surge to Oregon, Evans-Hatch (2004b) surmise that it likely was used more by California-bound emigrants than by Oregon-bound emigrants. They cite three California emigrants and one Oregon emigrant who traveled this route. A query of

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

OCTA's COED database for the term "Woodbury" yielded no emigration-related records. Based on the findings of Evans-Hatch and Mattes's (1988) ratio of 250 emigrants per record, an estimated 750 California-bound emigrants and 250 Oregon-bound emigrants traveled the Woodbury Cutoff. Most emigrants, however, did not bother to specify or describe which cutoff they followed from Old Fort Kearny/Nebraska City, so the actual number of travelers on this route could be higher.

The National Register of Historic Places registration form completed in 1992 for the Upper Oak Creek Descent Ruts states, "The Woodbury Trail was later used by the Mormons on their migration to Utah and became known as the 'Old Mormon Trail' or 'Mormon Variant.'" It is possible that the name is linked to Howard Egan's 1849 Mormon company of 64 members, who might have used the Woodbury variant. Likewise, some church freighters and eastbound parties may have traveled that route. However, the NPS has located no LDS Church documentation conclusively showing that any church-organized emigration or freight company used the Woodbury Cutoff to travel to Utah. Furthermore, the primary Mormon outfitting locale in 1859 (before establishment of the Nebraska City Cutoff routes) was Florence/Omaha, not Wyoming, Nebraska. Church-sponsored emigrant outfitting occurred at Old Wyoming in 1864–1866, after development of all of the Nebraska City Cutoff routes, and Mormon Trails Association researcher Ron Andersen specifies that those later emigration parties followed the Nebraska City Cutoff. They would not have encountered the Woodbury Cutoff at all.

**Conclusion:** In sum, the Woodbury Cutoff primarily served as a military route and, until establishment of the Nebraska City Cutoff routes beginning in 1860, a freighting and emigration route. The NPS (Steinacher et al. 1992) has determined the Woodbury Cutoff to be nationally significant "because it plays an important role in the evolutionary process of finding a more accessible and direct route to Fort Kearny." However, it is rarely mentioned in trail histories and appears to have received very low use by California and Oregon emigrants, and therefore is not necessarily nationally significant for its association with the Oregon and California emigrations. Based on the number of emigrant records located, an estimated 750 California-bound emigrants and 250 Oregon-bound emigrants traveled the Woodbury Cutoff. The NPS has located no records in the LDS Church History pioneer database or the Mormon Trails Association website that demonstrate use of this route by LDS Church-organized emigrant parties, although it is possible that Howard Egan's 69-member Mormon company used it in 1849. One place of historical interest, a quarter-mile-long set of wagon ruts on private property, has been identified along this route.

Designation of this route would add 66.5 new miles each to the Oregon, California, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails and to the National Trails System.

**21. Old Wyoming (Road to the) Nebraska City Cutoff.** This 8.5-mile route heads at the original 1856 town site of Wyoming, Nebraska, roughly 5 miles northwest and upstream from Nebraska City on the Missouri River, and ends at its junction with the 1862 northern route of the Nebraska City Cutoff. It is under consideration for addition to the California, Oregon, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails.

**Route Description:** The study route heads southwest from Old Wyoming, Nebraska, and climbs to a ridge between Squaw Creek and Wolf Creek. It crosses the Old Fort Kearny Road/Oxbow Trail about 7 miles southwest of the town site of Wyoming, and in another mile it joins the Nebraska City Cutoff.

**Historical Assets:** Little remains of Old Wyoming but a historical cemetery with more than 60 unmarked graves, long since plowed over, which is located on private property about a mile and a half from the original town site. No public record has been found to identify those who are interred at the graveyard, but some Mormon emigrants who died in camp could possibly be buried there (Wadsworth 2013:73). A roadside marker and plaque, which includes parts of original gravestones, commemorate the cemetery. The old wharf levee is still visible at the bottom of the bluff below the old town site. No

physical evidence of the old wagon road between Wyoming and the Nebraska City Cutoff is known to exist.

**Historical Summary:** In 1855, speculators from the East organized as the Wyoming Town Company and began buying land and selling lots along the Missouri River about 5 miles northwest of Nebraska City. The town was platted in 1856, and that year the settlement of Wyoming, Nebraska Territory, boasted “eighty houses and 450–500 inhabitants, two newspapers, two sawmills, a hotel, coach and wagon factory, log school house, and a lyceum [concert hall]” (Wilhite 1986:332).<sup>29</sup> Some people speculated that the new town might rival Nebraska City as an outfitting town for emigrants and freighters. Mail and stage routes between St. Joseph and Omaha all stopped at Wyoming, and steamboats arrived nearly every day to deliver goods and supplies.

By 1860, according to the federal census, fewer than 100 people resided at the once-thriving settlement and more than half of its houses stood vacant. However, in 1864, organizers of the Mormon emigration to Utah decided to move their outfitting camp from Florence (Winter Quarters/Omaha) downriver to Wyoming. There, Weeping Water Creek, a Missouri River tributary, provided a deep channel that allowed steamboats from the trailhead at St. Joseph to stop and unload passengers, including European converts bound for Utah. Town residents embraced the church’s proposal, promising its agents they would repair buildings for use by the church and vowing not to issue any liquor licenses (Wadsworth 2014:54, 70).

For three summers, the town of Wyoming served as a staging ground for the Mormon emigration. Most stayed there for about two weeks as preparations were made for the western leg of their trip. William Grant, an 1866 Mormon emigrant newly arrived from Britain, described his experience there as follows:

Wyoming is a frontier Town Very small. but I am first there I seek a place to stop but behold it is out of doors. Not even a bed can we get. we get a few willows and make a tent with quilts & sheets to creep in at night. and many hundreds of others do the same, so we are only Imitators—we have 3 weeks to wait till our Wagon Trains are ready to cross the great Plains of the Desert to [.....] still far away Utah, a bad storm one night washed us out while in bed, and we had to move to the rock house w[h]ere we had better quartars....

(Grant 2012: n.p.)

Between 1864 and 1866, about 25 emigration companies consisting of some 7,000 European converts left Wyoming, Nebraska, for Utah (Andersen 2009d). Many of these emigrants traveled west with down-and-back wagon trains from Utah, following the road from Old Wyoming for about eight and a half miles to merge onto the Nebraska City Cutoff.<sup>30</sup> The NPS has not located any description of travel along those miles to the cutoff.

In 1867, Mormon emigrants began traveling west from Omaha on the partially completed Union Pacific Railroad, bringing Wyoming’s outfitting days to an abrupt end (see Sklenar 2010:103). The following year, the town’s post office was closed down and a new town with a different name was incorporated at the old town site. However, the remaining population declined further when the Burlington Railroad

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<sup>29</sup> A participant in a public scoping meeting for this study observed that the original name of the town was Wyoming, not Old Wyoming as listed in the study legislation. The designator is retained here, however, in order to clarify that the subject town is the original settlement of Wyoming, Nebraska.

<sup>30</sup> Under the down-and-back system, LDS wagon trains freighted Utah-produced flour and salt pork east to sell in the Missouri River communities and on the return trip assisted LDS emigrants to Utah. Nebraska researcher Gail Holmes (personal communication, 7/02/2012) adds, “A nice little touch to the [down-and-back] story is that most of the covered wagon drivers from Utah were single young men, who were happy to meet some of the single young women from Scandinavia. Can you imagine a more romantic pioneer adventure?”

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

bypassed the town by 12 miles in 1870. In 1887, a “new” Wyoming was established about 2 miles west (Sklénar 2010; Williams 1936), purportedly to be closer to the railroad. The original town site has since become known as Old Wyoming. By 1936, nothing remained of either settlement called Wyoming, Nebraska, except an old cemetery with Mormon gravesites.

A query of OCTA’s COED database identified no record with mention of the Wyoming landing or associated trail by California- or Oregon-bound emigrants, and a search of Mattes 1969 and 1988 likewise turned up no indication of Oregon or California emigrants jumping off from that town.

**Conclusion:** In sum, nearly 7,000 Mormon emigrants departed Wyoming, Nebraska, in 1864–1866 via this short feeder to the Nebraska City Cutoff. The NPS has identified no contemporaneous documentation demonstrating use of this route by California or Oregon emigrants. An unmarked, plowed-over cemetery on private property is the only trail-related place of historical interest identified along this route.

If designated, the Old Wyoming Road to the Nebraska City Cutoff would add 8.5 new miles each to the Oregon, California, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails and to the National Trails System.

**22. Keokuk Route.** This 17.5-mile route took Mormon emigrants from Keokuk, Iowa, on the Mississippi River, north through Montrose and then west to join the 1846 Mormon pioneer trail at Sugar Creek. This route is under consideration for addition to the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** The map and description of the Keokuk route provided for the purposes of this feasibility study are conceptual, based on general descriptions of the route that appear in emigrant journals and correspondence. Researchers have turned up no historic map, sketches, or other period drawings depicting the original alignment of the route.

In general, emigrants departed from the Keokuk Campsite near today’s riverside Rand Park and followed an existing local road that roughly paralleled the Mississippi River to Montrose. The route continued northwesterly along existing roads through Montrose and the vicinity of New Boston, Iowa, and joined the 1846 Mormon pioneer trail in the Sugar Creek drainage a short distance east of today’s IA-394.

**Historical Assets:** Today, nothing remains of the old wagon road between Keokuk and Montrose, or of the Mormon camp at Keokuk. From Rand Park in Keokuk, however, visitors can appreciate a panoramic view east across the Mississippi, essentially the setting experienced by the Mormons who camped there in 1853. A plaque affixed to the base of a statue of Sac Chief Keokuk commemorates the Mormon presence there.

**Historical Summary:** The LDS Church used several key places as outfitting posts and trailheads for its overland emigrants. Most were on the Missouri River, but in 1853 church leaders designated Keokuk, Iowa, on the Mississippi River, as the outfitting post for converts arriving from Europe.

Prior to that year, Mormon immigration agents routinely brought European converts to shore at New Orleans and then sent them up the Mississippi by riverboat to St. Louis. From there the emigrants would continue on riverboats up the Missouri River to Kaneshville, Iowa, where they would debark to outfit for the overland trip to Salt Lake City. In 1852, however, the Missouri River steamboat *Saluda* exploded, killing more than two dozen Mormon emigrants en route to Kaneshville. In addition to the dangers of steamboat travel, the costs of outfitting at Kaneshville/Council Bluffs climbed dramatically when most LDS business owners closed up shop and departed for Utah that year, leaving non-Mormon entrepreneurs to name their prices for provisions and services. By routing the emigrants up the Mississippi beyond St. Louis to outfit at Keokuk, where supplies could be procured at less expense, church authorities could reduce the costs of outfitting while also avoiding risky riverboat travel on the Missouri. Once outfitted, the emigrant companies went overland across Iowa to the Mormon trailhead at Kaneshville/Council Bluffs.

Newly arrived emigrants gathered at a 2,000-acre encampment on the river bluffs at the outskirts of Keokuk, near the present intersection of North 17th and Park streets in the vicinity of present-day Rand Park. Approximately 2,500 European converts joined wagon companies there in 1853 and departed for Salt Lake City between mid-May and July (Woods and Atterberg 2003; Andersen 2009e).

The LDS Church used Keokuk and the Keokuk-to-Montrose Road for only one season because crossing 300 miles of Iowa prairie proved to be too costly and time-consuming (Woods 2010), and because Church President Brigham Young began encouraging European emigrants to land at northern ports in lieu of New Orleans (Woods and Bashore 2002:40). From Philadelphia, New York, and Boston, emigrants could travel by rail to the Missouri River jumping-off places. Besides being faster, relatively inexpensive, and less exhausting, this approach allowed emigrants to avoid exposure to several serious diseases that were endemic in the South at that time.

**Conclusion:** In sum, approximately 2,500 LDS converts outfitted at Keokuk and followed this route to Kanesville/Council Bluffs, Iowa, in 1853, using existing local roads. The mapped route is interpolated but probably reasonably accurate. The only identified trail-related place of recreational or historical interest along this route is a community park with a view of the Mississippi River.

If designated, this route would add about 17.5 new miles to the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail and to the National Trails System.

**23. 1846 Subsequent Routes A and B.** These 1846 routes altogether run about 119.5 miles across south-central Iowa. The earliest branch goes between Drakesville and Garden Grove, Iowa; and a slightly later branch extends from Dodge's Point, near today's Iconium, to the former town site of Leslie, Iowa. The routes are under consideration for addition to the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** Brigham Young's original 1846 pioneer company, known as the Camp of Israel, turned southwest from Drakesville, Iowa, crossed the Fox River, and traveled west along the Iowa-Missouri border. Companies that departed Nauvoo later that year stayed farther north on these "subsequent routes." Subsequent Routes A and B start out as a single alignment heading west from Drakesville, following the high ridges between North Fox Creek and Soap Creek and passing through Unionville. About a mile and a half northwest of Unionville begins a 5-mile trail segment that includes possible wagon swales and campsites. This segment lies between the Mormon Crossing of South Soap Creek and the Mormon Gardens campsite at the head of Buzzard Creek. The route continues through Moravia, Iowa, and then turns west. On Honey Creek north of Rathbun Lake, the route splits into the Garden Grove Branch (Route A) and the Chariton Point Branch (Route B).

- a. Garden Grove Branch (Route A). From the fork in the trail, the Garden Grove Branch turns southwest and crosses the Chariton River at the Bridgeview Public Use Area on Rathbun Lake. The trail continues generally west through Confidence, Millerton, and Cambria, Iowa, and joins the route of Brigham Young's original pioneer company 2 miles east of Garden Grove (Iowa Mormon Trails Association 1996).
- b. Chariton Point Branch (Route B). Instead of crossing the Chariton River, this branch follows the high ground north of the river to Chariton Point, near the town of Chariton. From there the route serpentine westerly, keeping north of the river, to merge with Brigham Young's original 1846 route near US 35 at Leslie, Iowa (Iowa Mormon Trails Association 1996).

**Historical Assets:** Most physical evidence of both alternates has disappeared due to agricultural activities. However, the Soap Creek segment, a 5-mile stretch of intermittent, faint wagon ruts, persists on private ground between the Mormon crossing of the South Fork of Soap Creek, north of Unionville, and the Mormon Gardens campsite. "Mormon Gardens" is a mile-long area at the head of Buzzard Creek where some emigrants reportedly laid over to grow crops. Garden Grove, where some of Young's

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

advance group stopped to build cabins and plant gardens for the oncoming emigration, today consists of a 3-acre park with some foundation outlines, a monument and interpretive exhibits, and a Mormon pioneer cemetery. The setting includes natural and agricultural areas.

**Historical Summary:** The route of the Camp of Israel, an advance group of pioneers led by Brigham Young out of Nauvoo in 1846, is the best known but not the most heavily traveled Mormon route across southern Iowa. Only about a quarter of the Mormon emigrants who started across Iowa that year were part of Brigham Young's original "winter exodus" from Nauvoo (Hartley 1997, 2000). Young's vanguard pioneers, traveling before the spring grass had sprouted, stayed south along the Iowa-Missouri border so that they could go into the settlements to purchase feed for their draft animals. Latter-day Saints who started from Nauvoo later in the season found enough grass and therefore had no need to go into the Missouri settlements, so they could maintain a more direct route across Iowa. The "subsequent routes" are shorter, more northern alternates taken by those "spring exodus" emigrants from Nauvoo. In addition, several hundred more Mormons left Nauvoo in a "fall exodus," probably traveling these "subsequent routes" as well.

Mormon Trails Association researcher Ron Andersen (2009e) estimates that around 7,000 emigrants used these two variants in 1846 and another 1,920 or so took these routes in later years. He reports that the records are unclear as to how many emigrants specifically followed the Garden Grove branch as opposed to the Chariton Point branch of the trace.

**Conclusion:** In sum, approximately 12,500 Mormons participated in the Nauvoo exodus in 1846 (Hartley 1997). Of those, between 9,000 and 10,000 Latter-day Saints would have traveled "Subsequent Routes A and B." Places of historical interest along the routes include trail remnants and the historically significant, temporary settlement site of Garden Grove.

Designation of this route would add about 119.5 new miles to the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail and to the National Trails System.

**24. 1856–1857 Handcart Route, Iowa City to Council Bluffs.** This route carried Mormon handcart traffic from Iowa City (where emigrants had arrived by rail) to Kaneshville/Council Bluffs, Iowa, on the Missouri River. The 271-mile route overlaps for 60.5 miles with the existing Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail. Here, the entire length of the handcart route is under consideration for addition to the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** This handcart route begins on the northwest side of Iowa City, goes through Coralville, and runs west along Clear Creek to the town of Oxford. From there it goes northwest to the Iowa River near Homestead, Iowa. The route then follows the modern corridor of US 6 to Marengo, where it leaves the river and the highway to follow Big and Little Bear creeks west to Malcom. Between Brooklyn and Malcom the route begins to parallel I-80, running about a half-mile north of the freeway. It passes south of Grinnell, crosses North Skunk River at Kellogg, and continues west to Newton, Iowa. The route soon crosses today's alignment of I-80 and the South Skunk River at Colfax, where it jogs south and west along modern road alignments and continues to Des Moines.

It crosses the Des Moines River just upstream of its confluence with the Raccoon River and continues west to intercept US 6 again at Walnut Creek. Next it follows the highway to Redfield, crosses the Middle and South Raccoon rivers, and turns southwest to intersect I-80 at the Cass/Adair county line. The route then follows Turkey Creek to Lewis, Iowa, where it joins the designated Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail. The handcart study route follows the designated historic trail into Kaneshville/Council Bluffs and turns north to the site of the historic Upper Missouri River Ferry (also called the North Ferry), located in northeastern Omaha approximately at the location of the I-680 bridge (G. Holmes, personal communication, 7/08/2012). There the emigrants crossed the Missouri River to today's North Omaha,

Nebraska, at the site of Winter Quarters, where the study route joins the designated Mormon Pioneer and California national historic trails.<sup>31</sup>

**Historical Assets:** Much of the 1856–1857 handcart route has been destroyed by agricultural activities and development, but a few associated sites still remain. These include a Mormon grave marker south of Grinnell and the grave of a Mormon child in the one-time town of Dalmanutha. Two sites that retain their historic character are the Clear Creek outfitting camp (Mormon Handcart Park) in Coralville and the East Nishnabotna Ferry House near Lewis, Iowa. The camp has faint evidence of grave mounds and is part of a natural area that looks much as it appeared when the area was occupied by handcart emigrants. The ferry house is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but the river crossing no longer exists because the river has changed course.

**Historical Summary:** Between 1856 and 1860, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints organized 10 brigades of emigrants who pushed and pulled their assigned handcarts across the plains and mountains to Salt Lake City. The handcart system was devised by Brigham Young to reduce the expense of transporting European emigrants overland to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake (Bagley 2009). The handcarts, made almost entirely out of wood, were typically the width of a wagon and 6 to 7 feet long. They had two wheels, a cargo box, and a pair of shafts with a crossbar for pushing and pulling. The vehicles weighed about 60 pounds when empty. In them, emigrants hauled up to 500 pounds of freight, which included flour, bedding, clothing, cooking utensils, and a tent (Pratt 2013; Kimball 1991b). Accompanying every 20 handcarts was an oxen- or mule-drawn wagon, loaded with additional supplies and equipment for about 100 emigrants.

In 1856–1857, more than 3,000 Mormon emigrants, mostly converts newly arrived from Europe, traveled by railroad to Iowa City to join LDS Church–organized handcart companies (Andersen 2009f, 2009g). Upon disembarking at the train depot, they crossed the Iowa River and walked 3 miles to their campground and outfitting post on the bank of Clear Creek, located at the small settlement of Clark’s Mill (later Coralville, at the northwest edge of Iowa City). Here the emigrants acquired their handcarts and prepared for the 1,700-mile trip to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake (Hartley 2006).

Their route from Iowa City extended about 200 miles along established local wagon roads from Coralville to Lewis, Iowa, where the route joined the 1846 Mormon pioneer trail to Kanesville/Council Bluffs. From there the emigrants continued through the Rocky Mountains to Salt Lake City.

**Conclusion:** In sum, approximately 3,000 Mormon emigrants pulled handcarts across Iowa following local wagon roads between towns. The handcart emigration was an LDS Church innovation, and the handcart has become an iconic symbol of pioneer courage, commitment, and faith. Among those who followed this route across Iowa in 1856 were the Martin and Willey Handcart companies, which became stranded in Wyoming due to a late start and early snowstorms. Their tragic stories are among the most compelling of the overland emigration. Trail-related places of historical interest include graves, an emigrant campsite, and a historic ferry house.

This handcart route is 271 miles long, but 60.5 of those miles are already part of the designated Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail. Designation of the study route would add 210.5 new miles to the Mormon Pioneer NHT and to the National Trails System.

**25. Lower Plattsmouth Route.** This 25.5-mile route begins on the Missouri River at the site of the Bethlehem-Plattsmouth Ferry landing at the east end of Main Street in Plattsmouth, Nebraska. From

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<sup>31</sup> The route of the handcart companies has been researched by Dr. Steven Faux and 10 students in his Honors Project at Drake University, in Des Moines, Iowa. Dr. Faux and his students used 10 handcart emigrant diaries to identify 48 documented locations or landmarks along the trail, and referenced those to 1875 Andreas County maps and other contemporaneous maps of Iowa in order to retrace the route (Faux 2006).

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

there it runs southwest to meet the Old Fort Kearny Road/Oxbow Trail at the town of Murdock, Nebraska. The route is under consideration for addition to the California, Oregon, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails.

**Route Description:** The Upper and Lower Plattsmouth routes briefly share a common corridor that begins at the ferry landing locale at the east end of Main Street in Plattsmouth, Nebraska. From there the combined route runs west down Main Street in Plattsmouth and, a mile west of town, splits into the Lower and Upper Plattsmouth routes.

The lower route runs southwest along a ridge between Eightmile Creek and Fourmile Creek for about 7 miles. It then turns west, continues through the town of Manley, and joins the Old Fort Kearny Road/Oxbow Trail at the town of Murdock.

**Historical Assets:** No trail-related places of recreational or historical interest have been identified along this route. Intensive building developments in the Plattsmouth area, as well as decades of farming activities along the Upper and Lower Plattsmouth routes west of Plattsmouth, have removed physical evidence of the old wagon trails.

**Historical Summary:** In 1847–1849, Mormon emigrants traveling along the north side of the Platte River from Florence and Kaneshville faced dangerous crossings of the Elkhorn and Loup Rivers, particularly in seasons of high rainfall. Adding to those difficulties, Forty-niners wishing to avoid crowds and cholera at the southern jumping-off towns surged to Kaneshville, where LDS merchants welcomed their business. Gold-seekers soon crowded the north-side “Mormon” trail, competing for grass and firewood and fouling the waterholes that Mormon emigrants had developed along the way (G. Holmes, personal communication, 6/17/2012; Mattes 1969:125).

In hopes of avoiding those problems, church organizers decided the next year’s emigration would follow the south side of the Platte. In January 1850, the Mormons built a warehouse at the settlement of Bethlehem, Iowa, which had been established in 1846 by prominent LDS physician Labbeus T. Coons. The church encouraged families to store much of their supplies and belongings there for retrieval in May and June, when they would start west (G. Holmes, personal communication, 6/17/2012).

The first company to depart the Mormon settlement at Kaneshville drove 18 miles south along the east bank of the Missouri River to Bethlehem and ferried to the Nebraska side of the river. From there the company followed an existing road toward the south and then cut a trail westerly to the Old Fort Kearny Road/Oxbow Trail (M. Bashore, personal communication, 3/15/2012). Church historians and researchers have identified their route as the Lower Plattsmouth Route.

Some 5,000 LDS emigrants departed Plattsmouth that summer along the Lower Plattsmouth Route (Andersen 2009h; Gail Holmes, personal communication, 7/6/2012). On their way across Nebraska on the south-side trail, however, they encountered throngs of gold-rushers, mostly men in all-male companies hurrying to the goldfields. These men could travel faster than the Mormon families with their babies and older members. Outpaced by the Argonauts, once again the Mormon emigrants met with a lack of firewood and befouled water along the trail. In 1851, the Mormon emigration returned to the north-side Platte River trail, which some claimed to be 100 miles shorter than the south-side route (G. Holmes, personal communication, 6/17/2012).

Thousands of California- and Oregon-bound emigrants, too, departed from Plattsmouth. For emigrants approaching the Missouri River from Iowa and other northern states, the Nebraska trailheads were closer and more convenient than St. Joseph, Westport, and Independence. In addition, they could take advantage of bridges, ferries, and graded ramps at stream crossings, all of which had been built by Mormons along the north-side trail to facilitate their own emigration across Iowa (G. Holmes, personal communication, 6/17/2012).

A search of Mattes (1988) identified eight records for California-bound emigrants and seven for Oregon bound emigrants departing from various ferries around Plattsmouth. A query of the “location” field of OCTA’s COED database for the term “Plattsmouth” identified an additional two references by California



emigrants and two Oregon emigrants who started overland after landing at Plattsmouth. Beyond Plattsmouth, they could follow either the lower or upper route to the Old Fort Kearny Road/Oxbow Trail. Because most emigrants did not distinguish in their journals between the upper and lower routes, the results cannot be quantified by trail variant. Based on Mattes's ratio of 250 emigrants per record, approximately 2,500 California-bound emigrants and 2,250 Oregon-bound emigrants departed from the Plattsmouth and nearby ferries and followed the Upper and Lower Plattsmouth routes.

**Conclusion:** In sum, use of the Lower Plattsmouth Route by more than 5,000 Mormon emigrants in 1850 is well documented. An estimated 2,500 California-bound and 2,250 Oregon-bound emigrants also traveled by these routes in 1849 and later years. The NPS has no information by which to estimate how many of these non-LDS travelers specifically used either the Upper or the Lower Plattsmouth route. No trail-related historical places of recreational or historical interest have been identified along this route.

Designation of this route would add 25.5 new miles each to the Oregon, California, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails and to the National Trails System.

**26. Upper Plattsmouth Route.** This 32-mile route begins on the Missouri River at the site of the Bethlehem-Plattsmouth Ferry landing, located at the east end of Main Street in Plattsmouth, Nebraska. From there it runs west to intercept the Old Fort Kearny Road/Oxbow Trail 2 miles southeast of Ashland, Nebraska. The route is under consideration for addition to the California, Oregon, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails.

**Route Description:** The Upper and Lower Plattsmouth routes for a short distance share a common corridor that begins at the ferry landing locale at the east end of Main Street in Plattsmouth, Nebraska. From there the combined route runs west down Main Street in Plattsmouth and, a mile west of town, splits into the Lower and Upper Plattsmouth routes.

The Upper Plattsmouth Route heads west, crosses Fourmile Creek, and turns northwest to meet the Platte River just east of Turkey Creek. Following the south bank of the Platte River, the route swings south to cross Decker Creek and northwest to Pawnee Creek before joining the Old Fort Kearny Road/Oxbow Trail 2 miles southeast of Ashland.

**Historical Assets:** No trail-related places of recreational or historical interest have been identified along this route. Intensive building developments in the Plattsmouth area, as well as decades of farming activities along the Upper and Lower Plattsmouth routes west of Plattsmouth, have removed physical evidence of the old wagon trails.

**Historical Summary:** See the historical summary for the Lower Plattsmouth Route, above. The NPS has been unable to identify any historical information specific to the Upper Plattsmouth Route.

**Conclusion:** In sum, based on Mattes's ratio of 250 emigrants per record, approximately 2,500 California-bound emigrants and 2,250 Oregon-bound emigrants departed from Plattsmouth and nearby ferries to follow the Upper or Lower Plattsmouth routes in 1849 and years thereafter. The NPS is unable to ascertain how many of these travelers specifically used the Upper Plattsmouth Route. Some 5,000 Mormons departing from Plattsmouth in 1850 are believed by researchers to have used the Lower Plattsmouth Route, not the upper variant. No trail-related historical places of recreational or historical interest have been identified along this route.

Designation of this route would add 32 new miles each to the Oregon, California, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails and to the National Trails System.

**27. Lower Bellevue Route.** This 40.5-mile route follows a broad curve of the Platte River between the Missouri River town of Bellevue, Nebraska, situated north of the mouth of the Platte, and the Elkhorn

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

River. The route is under consideration for addition to the California, Oregon, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails.

**Route Description:** The Lower Bellevue Route heads southwest for 6 miles from the historic Lower Missouri River Ferry landing near today's Front Street in northeast Bellevue, Nebraska. The route turns west along the north bank of the Platte and then roughly parallels the broad curve of the river north. It joins the western branch of the Upper Bellevue Route east of the Elkhorn River, 2 miles southwest of the intersection of US 275 and NE-31.

**Historical Assets:** No trail-related places of recreational or historical interest have been identified along these routes.

**Historical Summary:** European-American settlement in the area of Bellevue (about 9 miles south of the Middle Missouri River Ferry landing in downtown Omaha, Nebraska) began in the 1820s with a series of fur trade posts that conducted business with the Omaha, Otoe, Missouria, and Pawnee tribes.<sup>32</sup>

In 1835, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions sent Dr. Marcus Whitman, a physician and Presbyterian elder, and the Reverend Samuel Parker, a Congregational Church pastor, to minister to the Indians of the Oregon Country. The two proceeded up the Missouri River from Liberty, Missouri, to Bellevue, Nebraska, traveling with a party of American Fur Company trappers heading west. Some of the men of the caravan, who resented the missionaries' presence among them and plotted their murder, became afflicted with cholera while the party was encamped at Bellevue. Whitman treated and saved all but three of the ill men, earning the trappers' respect and cooperation for the remainder of the trip (Drury 1973a:119, 123–125).

Whitman returned to the East in the fall, and with his bride, Narcissa, and fellow missionaries Henry and Eliza Spalding, headed west once again from Bellevue in 1836. Narcissa and Eliza were the first white women to go overland to the Oregon Country. Historian Clifford Drury (1973a:18) writes, "The successful crossing of the Rockies...by Mrs. Whitman and Mrs. Spalding on July 4, 1836, unlocked the mountain gateway for men who wanted to take their families with them to Oregon. Where women could go riding horseback on side-saddles, other women and children could follow in covered wagons."

When Brigham Young's vanguard company of pioneers reached the Missouri River in 1846, they could see an Indian settlement and three trading posts on the west side of the river at Bellevue. One of the trading posts belonged to fur trader Peter Sarpy, who also had built a smaller repacking station on the east side of the river at a place commonly known as Pointe aux Poules, or Trader's Point (Hartley and Anderson 2006). Sarpy operated a "ferry" (actually a dinghy) to carry goods and passengers back and forth between the posts on opposite sides of the river. His crossing, located about a mile and a half north of today's Bellevue Bridge, became known as the Trader's Point-Bellevue Ferry or the Lower Missouri River Ferry (Mattes 1969:125).

From 1849 through the mid-1850s, Bellevue was one of several major jumping-off places on the Nebraska side of the Missouri River for freighters and for emigrants heading to California and Oregon. In 1852, Oregon-bound emigrant Ezra Meeker described a traffic jam of several hundred gridlocked wagons waiting to cross the Missouri at Bellevue as looking like "a big white flatiron." Enoch Conyers, traveling in 1852 with a company of 65 wagons going to Oregon, reported that the Bellevue ferry consisted of two roped-together scows that could accommodate two wagons at \$4 per wagon. Emigrants that year waited at the Kaneshville/Council Bluffs ferries for three to six weeks for an opportunity to cross (Mattes 1969:126).

According to Mattes, the 1853 emigration was of the same scale. That year Sarpy began operating a steam ferry at Trader's Point, but still it took the Forsdick Party 10 days to ferry 43 wagons across the Missouri River.

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<sup>32</sup> Researchers have mapped five ferry crossings, several of them known by multiple names, between North Omaha and Plattsmouth, Nebraska. The Middle Missouri River Ferry is also called the William D. Brown Ferry.

A query of the locations field of OCTA's COED database for the partial term "Bel" (in order to capture various spellings of Bellevue) identified two records for Oregon emigrants and two records for California emigrants who mentioned Bellevue, Belview, or Bell-view in their writings. (The data search was unable to distinguish between use of the Upper and Lower Bellevue routes.) Mattes (1988), on the other hand, shows records for 234 California-bound emigrants and 162 Oregon-bound emigrants who departed from all of the three to five ferry landings, including Bellevue, in the Kanesville/Council Bluffs area. Mattes's ratio of 250 emigrants per record, then, provides estimates of 58,500 California emigrants and 40,500 Oregon emigrants distributed among these crossings. His 1969 study of the Platte River Road generally estimates the California emigration through Kanesville/Council Bluffs at about 60,000. Although the proportion of traffic that specifically crossed at Bellevue and followed the Upper and Lower Bellevue routes cannot be determined, the totals from Mattes indicate a much higher volume of traffic, likely in the tens of thousands, than that which is supported by the COED data. Eyewitness accounts, as reported above, support that interpretation.

According to Hartley and Anderson (2006:232), "Many pioneer Mormons crossed the Missouri River just north of Bellevue," but no numbers are provided and the NPS has identified no documentation showing that large, organized LDS emigration companies departed from there. Bellevue, Trader's Point, and Pointe aux Poules do not appear on Kimball's (1980) listing of Mormon emigration points of departure. Mormon companies evidently used other crossings in the Kanesville/Council Bluffs area.

**Conclusion:** In sum, eyewitness accounts describe crowded conditions at the Bellevue ferry and weeks-long delays at all the Kanesville-area ferries in the early 1850s. Once across, Oregon and California traffic would have used both the Lower and Upper Bellevue routes (the upper being more direct) to reach the Council Bluffs Road near the Elkhorn River.

Emigrant documentation is not detailed enough to estimate the separate volumes of traffic that each of the two Bellevue alternates may have carried. Based on Mattes's (1988) ratio of 250 emigrants per record, the COED query puts an estimated 500 California-bound emigrants and another 500 Oregon-bound emigrants on the two routes out of Bellevue. However, Mattes's own documentation of emigration over the Kanesville/Council Bluffs-area ferries (which like other ferries on the Missouri probably had a number of different names) strongly argues that non-LDS traffic over these routes numbered in the tens of thousands, and that conclusion is supported by the eyewitness accounts of 1852. Most of the traffic evidently occurred in the 1850s, but these popular river landings likely were in use through the close of the trails era. Use of this crossing and its related trails by organized LDS Church-sponsored groups appears to have been virtually nonexistent, as it was not affiliated with an established church outfitting encampment.

The Bellevue ferry and upper or lower route figured importantly in the lives of six notable figures in the history of the American West: Marcus and Narcissa Whitman, Henry and Eliza Spalding, Brigham Young, and Ezra Meeker. No trail-related places of recreational or historical interest have been identified along the Bellevue routes.

Designation of this route would add 40.5 new miles each to the Oregon, California, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails and to the National Trails System.

**28. Upper Bellevue Route.** This route ran north in two branches, which met the Council Bluffs Road at different locations west of Omaha. The Upper Bellevue Route, totaling about 44.5 miles in length, is under consideration for addition to the California, Oregon, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails.

**Route Description:** The Upper Bellevue Route begins in Bellevue, Nebraska, at the historic Lower Missouri River Ferry landing near today's Front Street. Heading west, it crosses Papillion Creek and turns northwest. The trail forks about a mile southwest of Ralston, Nebraska.

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- a. The eastern branch continues northwest along the east bank of Hell Creek for about 5 miles and intersects the Lower Route of the Council Bluffs Road coming from the Middle Missouri River Ferry site in metropolitan Omaha (see Council Bluffs Road, below).
- b. The western branch heads west, passing through Millard, Nebraska, to a junction with the Lower Bellevue route. From there the route crosses the Elkhorn River and turns northwest, following the north bank of the Platte. It reaches a junction with the southern branch of the Council Bluffs Road about 2 miles southeast of Fremont, Nebraska.

**Historical Assets:** No trail-related places of recreational or historical interest have been identified along the Upper or Lower Bellevue routes.

**Historical Summary:** Please refer to the historical summary for the Lower Bellevue Route, above.

**Conclusion:** In sum, eyewitness accounts describe crowded conditions at the Bellevue ferry and weeks-long delays at all the Kanesville-area ferries. Once across, Oregon and California traffic would have used both the Lower and Upper Bellevue routes (the upper being more direct) to reach the Council Bluffs Road near the Elkhorn River.

Emigrant documentation is not detailed enough to estimate the separate volumes of traffic that each of the two Bellevue alternates may have carried. Based on Mattes's (1988) ratio of 250 emigrants per record, the COED query puts an estimated 500 California-bound emigrants and another 500 Oregon-bound emigrants on the two routes out of Bellevue. However, Mattes's own documentation of emigration over the Kanesville/Council Bluffs-area ferries (which like other ferries on the Missouri probably had a number of different names) strongly argues that non-LDS traffic over these routes numbered in the tens of thousands, and that conclusion is supported by the eyewitness accounts of 1852. Most of the traffic evidently occurred in the 1850s, but these popular river landings likely were in use through the close of the trails era. Use of this crossing and its related trails by organized LDS Church-sponsored groups appears to have been virtually nonexistent, as it was not affiliated with an established church outfitting encampment.

The Bellevue ferry and upper or lower route figured importantly in the lives of six notable figures in the history of the American West: Marcus and Narcissa Whitman, Henry and Eliza Spalding, Brigham Young, and Ezra Meeker. No trail-related places of recreational or historical interest have been identified along the Bellevue routes.

Designation of this route in its entirety would add 44.5 new miles each to the California, Oregon, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails and to the National Trails System.

**29. Council Bluffs Road.** This 652.5-mile complex of wagon routes begins in the vicinity of today's Omaha, Nebraska, and follows the north side of the Platte and North Platte rivers to Fort Laramie, Wyoming. It includes multiple collector routes that originate at several ferry sites in the Omaha area, pass through the city, and converge 3 miles east of the Elkhorn River.

The Council Bluffs Road, including all of its alternate routes and branches, is already designated as part of the California National Historic Trail; and the main trunk of the Council Bluffs Road, exclusive of alternate routes and branches, is already designated as part of the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail. For the purposes of this study, the entire Council Bluffs Road, including its alternates and branches, is being evaluated for addition to the Oregon National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** In the mid-1800s, three major ferry landings existed in the vicinity of today's Omaha: the Middle Mormon Ferry, roughly a half-mile south of US 92; the Upper Missouri River Ferry (also called the North Mormon Ferry), near today's I-680 bridge; and the Middle Missouri River Ferry (also called the William D. Brown Ferry), north of today's downtown bridge between Omaha and Council Bluffs. A web of routes across north Omaha fed traffic from the ferries along various branches of the Council Bluffs Road. The numerous collector routes across Omaha converge into a single trail 3 miles

east of the Elkhorn River. Just beyond that junction, however, the trail forks again. Each of the major branches is described separately below.

- a.** Two major routes began at the Upper Missouri River Ferry Landing near the original Mormon settlement of Winter Quarters (later called Florence, today's northeast Omaha).
  - i.** Upper Route A was used by Brigham Young's vanguard Mormon pioneer company in 1847 and also was used later by emigrants to California and Oregon. It is the primary route of the Council Bluffs Road, already part of the designated Mormon Pioneer and California national historic trails, and is here being considered for designation as part of the Oregon National Historic Trail. Upper Route A heads west from Winter Quarters and passes through a wooded area near the junction of Military Road and Fort Street, where a 100-foot section of the original trail can still be seen. This is the only surviving emigrant trail remnant in the Omaha area. The trail next crosses Papillion Creek and I-680. It runs north of Standing Bear Lake, is joined by the Lower Route (coming from the Middle Missouri River Ferry Landing), and continues toward the Elkhorn River.
  - ii.** Upper Route B heads northwest from the Upper Missouri River Ferry Landing, passes through the North Omaha Airport, and then curves around the headwaters of Little Papillion Creek. It next heads west to cross Big Papillion Creek, and continues toward the Elkhorn River.

Upper Routes A and B join 3 miles east of the Elkhorn River, and the study route continues west as a single corridor.

- b.** A network of routes leads north and west from the Middle Missouri River Ferry Landing in downtown Omaha. All of these routes are designated California National Historic Trail and are under study for addition to the Oregon National Historic Trail. Emigrants here could choose between the following options:
  - i.** Take one of three routes north to Upper Route A and continue to the junction east of the Elkhorn River.
  - ii.** Head west from the ferry along the Lower Route, crossing today's alignment of I-680 and Big Papillion Creek, to intercept the eastern branch of the Upper Bellevue Route near Boys Town, Nebraska. There the Lower Route turns northwest, following the north branch of West Papillion Creek to meet Upper Route A 2 miles southwest of Bennington.
- c.** A mile west of the junction of Upper Routes A and B, but still east of the Elkhorn River, the trail splits again.
  - i.** The southern branch heads southwest to cross the Elkhorn. The southern crossing location can be viewed at an interpretive site in Elkhorn Crossing State Recreation Area. It is the original crossing used by Brigham Young's advance company in 1847 and is part of the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail. This branch then turns northwest and crosses US 275 northwest of Mercer, where it intersects the western branch of the Upper Bellevue Route before continuing on to Fremont.
  - ii.** The northern branch heads northwest, crosses the Elkhorn about a mile and a half north of the first ford and parallels the southern route to Fremont. The northern crossing was probably more heavily used because it is a shorter route. It is the "1847 Alternate Elkhorn Crossing" identified in the feasibility study legislation for consideration for the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail. This crossing is described in the separate entry for the Elkhorn and Loup River crossings, below.

The two alternates rejoin on the west side of Fremont. From there the Council Bluffs Road study route is a single corridor that continues along the north side of the Platte River through Ames, North Bend, Rogers, and Schuyler, Nebraska. Two miles southwest of Schuyler, a spur leads to

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and from Shinn's Ferry on the Platte River, which carried emigrants to the Old Fort Kearny Road/Oxbow Trail on the south side of the river.

- d. The trail continues west to the town of Columbus, where it forks yet again into two major branches:
  - i. The Council Bluffs Road-Platte River Route (the southern branch) is already designated California National Historic Trail and is under consideration for addition to the Oregon National Historic Trail. It fords the Loup River at Columbus and continues southwest along the north bank of the Platte River. This route passes through Duncan, crosses Prairie Creek and Silver Creek, and continues south of the towns of Clarks and Central City. Two miles southwest of Central City, a monument commemorates the emigrant landmark of Lone Tree. The trail continues along the north bank of the Platte until it meets the Council Bluffs Road-Loup River Route 7 miles northwest of Grand Island, Nebraska.
  - ii. The Council Bluffs Road-Loup River Route (the northern branch) remains on the north side of the Loup River, passing through Monroe and Genoa, Nebraska. It is already designated for the California and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails and is under consideration for addition to the Oregon National Historic Trail. The trail passes both the Pawnee Indian Mission and the Pawnee village site, which were frequently mentioned in emigrant journals. At the lower Loup River ford, 3 miles northeast of Fullerton, Nebraska, this branch splits again.
    - (a) Brigham Young's pioneer company crossed the Loup River here at the lower Loup River ford and continued west along the south side of the Loup River to the present-day Nance/Merrick county line, 3 miles northwest of Palmer, Nebraska.
    - (b) Because the lower Loup River ford was difficult, later travelers remained on the north side of the Loup, crossing the Cedar River, passing through Fullerton, and continuing 14 miles to the upper Loup River ford. Here, near the mouth of Cottonwood Creek, they crossed the river. This crossing is the same upper Loup River crossing that is under evaluation for the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail, discussed further in a separate entry for the Elkhorn and Loup River crossings, below. The lower and upper Loup variants rejoin there, on the south side of the Loup River.

Now the Council Bluffs-Loup River route continues due south for 20 miles. About 7 miles northeast of Grand Island, Nebraska, on the north bank of the Wood River, the main Platte River and Loup River branches of the Council Bluffs Road merge into a common corridor.

The recombined route stays on the north side of the Wood River and continues southwest past Grand Island. It crosses the Wood River south of Alda and passes through the Murdock site, where deep swales are still visible.

The study route continues southwest along the south bank of the Wood River. About a mile west of Gibbon it veers away from the Wood River and heads southwest toward the Platte River. Continuing along the north bank of the Platte, the route passes near historic Fort Kearny, a military post located on the opposite side of the river. It continues along the north side of the Platte, passing south of the towns of Kearney and Elm Creek, where the river and study route begin a broad curve to the northwest. The route then continues westerly, going south of Lexington and Cozad.

The study route crosses along the south edge of Gothenburg and continues to the confluence of the North and South Platte rivers, about 3 miles east of the town of North Platte, which is situated in the fork of the rivers. Keeping to the north bank of the North Platte, the route continues westerly through the

sand hills (where ruts are still visible) to Lake McConaughy, a reservoir that submerges approximately 19 miles of the original trail route.

The trail route emerges from the lake, still hugging the north bank of the North Platte River, and passes through Lewellen. Emigrants on this route could look across the river there and see Ash Hollow. The Council Bluffs Road study route continues northwesterly along the river to reach Ancient Bluff Ruins, a trail landmark 4 miles east of the town of Broadwater. It continues through Broadwater and goes through Scottsbluff, Nebraska. (Chimney Rock National Historic Site and Scotts Bluff National Monument, both significant trail landmarks in western Nebraska, are on the opposite side of the river.) From Scottsbluff, the Council Bluffs Road route continues along the north bank of the North Platte, passing south of the towns of Mitchell and Morrill. At the town of Henry, Nebraska, the route enters Wyoming.

Next the Council Bluffs Road study route runs northwesterly past Torrington toward today's community of Fort Laramie, Wyoming. About a mile west of town is the location of the North Platte Ferry, where emigrants ferried or forded the river to arrive at the historic military post of Fort Laramie. The Council Bluffs Road study route ends at the North Platte Ferry site.

**Historical Assets:** No historic trail remnants are visible at either the Middle Missouri River Ferry site or the Upper Missouri River Ferry site, but the upper site is spanned by a modern bridge that offers a river view that is interpreted in the town of Florence. A 100-foot section of original trail known as the Military Road Ruts, located on public land, is the only known remaining trail segment in Omaha. The lower crossing of the Elkhorn River is interpreted at the river's edge in Elkhorn Crossing State Recreation Area, 10 miles southeast of Fremont. The Lone Tree site on the Council Bluffs Road-Platte River Route, 2 miles south of Central City, Nebraska, today has a monument where the landmark tree once stood. The Murdock site, 2 miles south of Alda, Nebraska, is a 2.4-acre site where deep swales can be seen. The Great Platte River Road Archway Monument at Kearney is a visitor center that interprets the trail corridor through Nebraska. North of Sutherland, Nebraska, visitors will find extensive wagon ruts through the "sand hills" along the north side of the Platte River. Ancient Bluff Ruins, the most dramatic and extensive land formation on the north side of the river, is located 4 miles east of Broadwater. From the north side of the river, emigrants could see the well-known landmarks of Courthouse Rock, Chimney Rock, and Scotts Bluff in the distance. Nothing remains of the original Fort Laramie ford and ferry site, but a historic 1875 military bridge approximates the original location of the crossing to Fort Laramie National Historic Site.

**Historical Summary:** The trail going up the north side of the Platte and North Platte rivers to the vicinity of Fort Laramie was the original long-distance wagon route west to South Pass. The route began as an Indian trail but was later used by the fur trade to carry supplies to the annual trade rendezvous in the Rocky Mountains. Missionaries Marcus and Narcissa Whitman and Henry and Eliza Spalding, who joined a fur trade caravan on their way to the Oregon Country in 1836, are considered by many to be the first Oregon pioneer families to make the overland trip. Narcissa Whitman and Eliza Spalding were the first white women to travel overland to the Oregon Country, demonstrating that women could endure the hardships of the trail. By 1841, when the first wagon train of emigrants started for Oregon and California, the trade in beaver pelts was over and no more fur caravans escorted travelers up the north side of the Platte toward South Pass. Because the primary jumping-off places in the early 1840s were south of the Platte River at Independence and Westport, the bulk of the early emigration traveled along the south side of the Platte River.

In 1847, however, Brigham Young used the north-side fur trace to take his pioneer company from present-day Omaha to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake. Others soon followed, and the old fur trace (with variations) gradually became an emigrant trail known as the Council Bluffs Road.

Because of historical interest focused on the 1846–1847 Mormon exodus to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake, the route on the north side of the Platte River today is popularly known as the Mormon Trail and is the congressionally designated route of the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail. However, historian

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Merrill Mattes (1990:3) observes, “Mormons composed only a fraction of the north-side total during the overall migration period, 1841–1866. The great majority of emigrants on the Platte’s north side were not Mormons, and they were heading not for Utah but for California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, and other points west.” In fact, Mattes concludes, based on research he conducted for his seminal *Platte River Road Narratives*, at least one-third of overland emigrants crossed the Missouri River and started west from the Omaha/Council Bluffs area north of the river. He estimates that 35,000 Mormons used the north-side Mormon Trail from 1846 through 1866 (the others traveled along on the south side of the river), compared with approximately 150,000 non-Mormon emigrants who traveled the north-side Council Bluffs Road toward Oregon, California, Colorado, and other western destinations.<sup>33</sup>

Mattes (1988) abstracts 162 records concerning Oregon-bound emigrants who jumped off directly onto the Council Bluffs Road from Missouri River ferry crossings. Others, approaching from the south, crossed the Platte River farther west to join the traffic along the north-side trail. A COED query for “Council Bluffs Road” identified 203 records relating to Oregon-bound emigrants, most traveling in 1852–1853, that mention this route. Based on Mattes’s ratio of 250 emigrants per record and using the higher counts from the COED query, an estimated 50,750 Oregon-bound emigrants followed the Council Bluffs Road west to Fort Laramie. This may be an overestimate, however, as Unruh (1979) figures the entire Oregon emigration between 1840 and 1860 at just 53,062 persons. Nevertheless, the high number of records does indicate a substantial Oregon emigration along this road.

Of the 162 records for all years on the Council Bluffs Road, four of the records document use of the north-side Council Bluffs Road by Oregon-bound emigrants between 1841 and 1848. Using Mattes’s ratio, this provides an estimate of 1,000 emigrants who traveled this road toward Oregon prior to the California gold rush.

**Conclusion:** In sum, the extensive research of Merrill Mattes as presented in his *Platte River Road Narratives* and his 1990 article in *Overland Journal* demonstrates a very high volume of non-Mormon traffic (an estimated 150,000 emigrants) bound for California, Oregon, and other western destinations via the Council Bluffs Road. COED query results, employing Mattes’s ratio of 250 emigrants per record, suggest that approximately 50,750 emigrants specifically bound for Oregon used all variants of the Council Bluffs Road between 1836 and 1868, with most traveling after 1852. This number is probably an overestimate but it is indicative of significant use of the road by the Oregon emigration.

Numerous trail-related places of recreational and historic interest, including the Great Platte River Road Archway Monument, original trail remnants, pioneer graves, and major geographic landmarks, are found all along this route.

Designation of the entire Council Bluffs Road as Oregon National Historic Trail would add 652.5 miles to the Oregon NHT but no new miles to the National Trails System, as the entire Council Bluffs Road is already part of the California NHT. Most of it also is designated Mormon Pioneer NHT.

**30. 1847 Alternative Elkhorn and Loup River Crossings in Nebraska.** A 16-mile alternate that includes an 1847 Mormon pioneer ford of the Elkhorn River is located in Dodge County, Nebraska, and the crossing itself is located a mile and a half west of Elk City, Nebraska. A 21-mile alternate that includes an 1847 Mormon pioneer ford of the Loup River is located in Nance County, Nebraska, and the crossing itself is about 4 miles northeast of Palmer. These two alternates, associated with the Council Bluffs Road, are already designated as part of the California National Historic Trail and are being evaluated for addition to the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail. They are also part of the Council Bluffs Road under study for addition to the Oregon National Historic Trail.

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<sup>33</sup> Based on LDS Church documentation, Ron Andersen of the Mormon Trails Association puts the count at about 35,900 Mormon emigrants on the north-side trail.



**Route Description:** The alternate route to the upper Mormon crossing of the Elkhorn River branches away from the trunk of the Council Bluffs Road (also the existing Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail) approximately 5 miles north and 1 mile west of Elkhorn, Nebraska. It heads northwest to cross the Elkhorn River about a mile and a half west of Elk City, Nebraska. Beyond the ford, the route continues northwest through the town of Fremont and rejoins the designated route of the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail about a mile west of Fremont. This alternate runs parallel to and about a mile apart from the already designated route of the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail.

The route to the upper Loup River crossing begins at the lower Loup River ford, 3 miles northeast of Fullerton, Nebraska, where the Council Bluffs Road splits into two short, parallel alternates. Brigham Young's 1847 vanguard pioneer company crossed the Loup River at the lower ford and continued west along the south side of the Loup River to the present-day Nance/Merrick county line, 3 miles northwest of Palmer, Nebraska. This route is part of the existing Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail.

However, because the lower ford was difficult to cross, Mormon companies that followed later that spring stayed on the north side of the Loup. They crossed the Cedar River, passed through Fullerton, and continued about 14 miles to cross the Loup River ford near the mouth of Cottonwood Creek. Along that distance the two alternates are parallel, 1 to 2 miles apart on opposite sides of the Loup. A short distance south of the upper Loup crossing, this route rejoins the Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail, which turns south toward the Platte River.

**Historical Assets:** No places of historic or recreational interest have been identified on the Elkhorn and Loup crossing alternates.

**Historical Summary:** The Council Bluffs Road as a whole was traveled by approximately 35,000 Mormon emigrants, amounting to more than half of the total Mormon emigration to Utah (Mattes 1990). The alternate upper Loup River crossing was used by the 1,637-member "Big Company" that followed Brigham Young's 1847 vanguard pioneers from Winter Quarters to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake (Hartley and Anderson 2006:268; Andersen 2009i). The northern Elkhorn alternate crossing appears on GLO plats as part of the "Old Mormon Road" to Utah, and Hartley and Anderson (2006:252) write that "there is no doubt this northern site was used by many Mormon emigrants." However, the NPS has located no data that enumerate or estimate total Mormon use of the Elkhorn River crossing.

**Conclusion:** Designation of the Loup and Elkhorn river crossings and associated branches or alternates as Mormon Pioneer and Oregon national historic trail would add 37 new miles to those trails. However, no new miles would be added to the National Trails System, as the crossings are part of the Council Bluffs Road, which is already part of the California NHT. No places of historic or recreational interest have been identified along the route.

**31. Childs Cutoff.** This 152-mile route crosses rough country along the north side of the North Platte River between the North Platte Ferry crossing (at historic Fort Laramie, Wyoming) and the Upper Platte Ferry and ford at Casper, Wyoming.

Childs Cutoff is already designated as part of the California National Historic Trail and is being evaluated for addition to the Oregon and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails.

**Route Description:** The Childs Cutoff study route begins at the North Platte Ferry and ford near Fort Laramie, Wyoming, and follows the general course of the river for 6 miles. It then veers away from the river and cuts northwesterly across rugged, high ground to avoid the impassable North Platte River canyon. The route continues through Hartville, traverses Rocky Pass, crosses Long Canyon, and climbs Emigrant Hill, where swales are still visible. Next it runs north through the Camp Guernsey Training Area for the Wyoming Military Department and follows Box Elder Creek beyond the Smith Ruts to Box Elder Springs. The route continues northwest across Muddy Creek, where the ford is submerged beneath the Glendo Reservoir. West of the reservoir the route splits, with branches going north and

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south around the Grey Hills. The branches rejoin at the north bank of the North Platte River. The route continues through Orin and swings north to Douglas, Wyoming. It climbs McKinstry Ridge, then turns west and descends again to the North Platte River. Next the study route follows the north bank of the river past Glenrock (on the south bank) and continues west past historic Reshaw's Bridge at Evansville and the 1849 Mormon Ferry site in northeast Casper, Wyoming. At Casper the route fans out into a network of variants through the city. Childs Cutoff ends at the Upper Platte Ferry landing and ford near historic Fort Caspar, where traffic on the south bank of the Platte River crossed to the north side before leaving the river and heading toward the Sweetwater country.

**Historical Assets:** Fort Laramie, located across the North Platte River from Childs Cutoff, is a national historic site managed by the NPS. A 15-mile section of well-preserved trail corridor with wagon ruts, swales, and several emigrant graves begins at Rocky Pass, north of Hartville, Wyoming, and winds through rocky hills that were known to emigrants as the Black Hills. Trail remnants ascend Emigrant Hill, with emigrant graves at the summit. The segment continues to the Smith Ruts on Box Elder Creek, where a 50-foot stretch of ruts is cut into the soft sandstone outcrop, and it ends at the emigrant campground at Box Elder Springs. A 5-mile section of this trail segment crosses Wyoming Military Department (National Guard) lands, with restricted access to the public. A second segment of trail corridor with associated ruts and swales extends between Harvey Gulch and Soldier Creek. These ruts ascend McKinstry Ridge, where oddly shaped, cylindrical rocks stand at the summit. The Cole Creek trail segment, with intermittent deep swales and a winding, linear depression, crosses rolling grasslands and agricultural fields from the mouth of Cole Creek to a point 2 miles east of WY-256. Sugar Loaf Hill, a distinctive landmark on Childs Cutoff, is a solitary mound rising several hundred feet from the river bottom south of Douglas, Wyoming. Fort Caspar is a city park with the fort reconstructed to its 1863–1865 appearance.

**Historical Summary:** Through 1849, emigrants believed the country on the north side of the North Platte River beyond Fort Laramie was impassable to wagons, so travelers on the north-side Council Bluffs Road crossed by ferry or ford to the south side of the river before proceeding west. Arriving at the crossing during the summer of 1850, emigrant Andrew Child's 19-wagon party found the river too high to ford. In order to avoid paying ferry passage, the party decided to cut a new north-side trail beyond the fort, despite dire warnings from soldiers and frontiersman Kit Carson (McKinstry 1975). Child's party was successful, nonetheless, gaining two days on wagon trains that crossed to the south side; and they reported that they found "as good a road, better grass, and kept clear of the sickness of which there is a great deal on the [south] side" (McKinstry 1975:147). Keeping to the north side had the additional advantage of avoiding two very dangerous crossings of the North Platte River.

Child described his new route in a guidebook, *Overland Route to California*, published in 1852, and the cutoff immediately drew significant traffic. Among the numerous emigrants who documented their use of the route was 1854 Oregon emigrant Winfield Scott Ebey, who observed, "A road has been made all the way up the north side [of the North Platte River] so that Emigrants are now saved the trouble of twice crossing the Platte – by which many lives & much trouble, is saved as Many have lost their lives in Crossing this Stream" (Ebey 1997).

A query of OCTA's COED database identified mention of "Child's Cutoff" in 130 Oregon records and 33 Utah records. Based on Mattes's (1988) ratio of 250 emigrants per record, an estimated 32,500 Oregon-bound emigrants and 8,250 Mormon emigrants used this cutoff. (The online LDS Church History pioneer database and the Mormon Trails Association website do not address this specific route, so Mattes's Utah data were employed in this instance even though a few of his Utah records pertain to non-Mormons.) The Mormon emigration, however, typically had a lower ratio of emigrants to trail journals, so this number is probably an overestimate for that migration.

**Conclusion:** In sum, Childs Cutoff was shorter than the south-side trail and avoided two dangerous crossings of the North Platte River. The Oregon emigration over this route is estimated at 32,500; the Mormon emigration over Childs Cutoff is estimated at 8,250 persons. Use of the route began in 1850 and probably continued through the end of the overland emigration era. Places of recreational and historical

interest along this route include Fort Laramie National Historic Site, original trail remnants, emigrant graves, intact historic setting, and a geographic landmark.

Designation of Childs Cutoff as part of the Oregon and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails would add 152 miles to those trails but no new miles to the National Trails System, as it is already part of the California National Historic Trail.

**32a. Cherokee Trail.** The Cherokee Trail, a California gold rush wagon trail out of Oklahoma, was blazed by mixed parties of non-Indian southerners and members of the Cherokee Nation in 1849 and 1850. It is not to be confused with the Cherokee Trail of Tears, by which Cherokees and other tribes from the southeastern US were forced to relocate to Oklahoma in 1838–1839.

The Cherokee Trail starts at Grand Saline, a Cherokee Nation salt processing site on the Grand (Neosho) River in Oklahoma, and continues to the vicinity of Denver, where it splits into two branches that join the designated California National Historic Trail at different locations in western Wyoming. Altogether, the Cherokee Trail and its variants traverse 1,606.5 miles. Approximately 365 miles of the Cherokee Trail study route, from the vicinity of McPherson, Kansas, west to La Junta, Colorado, already is designated Santa Fe National Historic Trail. This route is under evaluation for addition to the California National Historic Trail.

The Cherokee Trail from Grand Saline and along only the 1849 Northern Route through Wyoming is 1,276 miles long. The Cherokee Trail from Grand Saline and along only the 1850 Southern Route through Wyoming is 1,315 miles long.

**Route Description:** The route described below is largely that proposed by Cherokee/Overland Trail historians Pat and Jack Fletcher and Lee Whiteley, who have spent years independently and with federal agency personnel locating and mapping the trail and ground-truthing portions of the route. For much of its length from Oklahoma through Wyoming, these researchers interpolated the trail route based on their analysis of historical documentation, as is the case for many of the study routes under consideration here. Some sections of the Cherokee Trail, however, have been mapped and documented by professional archeologists.

The mapped locations of Cherokee routes across Oklahoma, Kansas, and Colorado have not been disputed by other researchers and are suitable for feasibility study purposes. However, the precise alignments of the two variants across southern Wyoming (especially the 1849 “Northern Route”), the relative levels of use they received, and their historical significance are subjects of debate among agency trail managers and other interested parties. Researchers hold different opinions about the accuracy of both the historical GLO plats and current maps of the Cherokee Trail through Wyoming, including maps produced by professional archeologists conducting field survey. Those differences can be difficult to resolve because field identification of trail trace is often a matter of judgment: surveyors must attempt to distinguish 1849–1850 wagon trace from later wagon trails and determine where the original route has been obscured by motorized use and modern road improvements. Debates about the Wyoming routes mostly center on differences of 1 or 2 miles along the general route corridors; the locations of river crossings where historic trail remnants are few; and the route taken by the 1849 Cherokee party between Sage Creek, in the Kindt Basin south of Rawlins, and the Point of Rocks area east of Rock Springs (Oberndorf 2014).

The 1850 Southern Route across Wyoming (including a short dip into Colorado) is approximately 330.5 miles in length, and about 30% of that route has been professionally surveyed by or for federal land management agencies. In three field projects for the BLM’s Rawlins Field Office, archeologists documented 60 miles of the Southern Route and determined that 33 of those miles were nationally significant trail remnants, eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (Johnson 2006a, 2008, 2011). During a 2007 reconnaissance survey, archeologists from the Rock Springs Field Office investigated approximately 33 miles of potential Cherokee Trail, as identified from historic maps,

## ***Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes***

previous recordings, and aerial imagery, and determined that some 25 miles were nationally significant trail remnants that are eligible for National Register listing. The Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurred with those determinations (C. Sievers, personal communication, 7/24/2008). Other BLM projects have documented short segments of the Southern Route (e.g., Hansen and Swensen 2005; Brunette 1997). In addition, several miles of trail on the Medicine Bow and Ashley National Forests have been surveyed and mapped as part of public archeology projects sponsored by the USFS.

Overall, this professional field mapping of physical traces of the 1850 Southern Route corresponds closely to the route as originally interpolated and mapped by Whiteley, years before physical survey was conducted.

In comparison, little of the 296-mile 1849 Northern Route across Wyoming has been physically surveyed for trail trace because there have been few energy development projects in that area to trigger the need for, and to fund, archeological work that might find and document the trail. Archeological investigations in 2009, though, did identify about 4 miles of “shallow mostly continuous” National Register-eligible Cherokee Trail swale along the eastern foot of White Mountain, north of Rock Springs, Wyoming (Fleming et al. 2009:21).

Trail investigator Russel Tanner, formerly an archeologist with the Rock Springs Field Office of the BLM, believes physical trace of the 1849 Northern Route to be otherwise “non-existent,” but acknowledges that it “has not been looked for very much if at all” (R. Tanner, personal communication, 4/15/2012). The presence of physical trail remnants is not required in order for a route to be designated as part of a national historic trail, but even intermittent physical evidence helps to identify the route’s general alignment and can provide opportunities for recreational use and historical interpretation. In this instance, the Northern Route might not be well enough known to merit congressional designation. Bureau archeologists almost unanimously cite the need for fieldwork in order to identify the 1849 route of travel across Wyoming.

Below, the route of the entire wagon trail is described as it is currently understood, mostly as the result of the work of Fletcher, Fletcher, and Whiteley.

The Cherokee Trail study route begins at Grand Saline, on the east bank of the Grand River at the mouth of Saline Creek, and crosses the river a mile south of Salina, Oklahoma. Today the crossing is submerged by a reservoir. The route continues northwest through the town of Chelsea, past the landmark of Coodys Bluff, and crosses the Verdigris River near the north end of Oologah Lake. It passes Delaware, Oklahoma, continues north along California Creek, and enters Kansas near the Washington/Nowata county line.

The route crosses US 166 about 7 miles west of Coffeyville, Kansas, then heads northwesterly, passing 5 miles southwest of Elk City, to cross KS-99 at the town of Moline. Continuing northwest across the Kansas prairie for another 45 miles, the trail fords the Walnut River south of El Dorado. The crossing area was a major campground for travelers on the Cherokee Trail. The route continues northwest and crosses the Whitewater River a mile northwest of Potwin, Kansas. It runs across open prairie for another 38 miles, passing south of Goessel to arrive at Running Turkey Creek. There the Cherokee Trail study route merges with the Santa Fe Trail (designated national historic trail) and turns west. The combined Cherokee/Santa Fe Trail goes south of McPherson and continues westerly across the Little Arkansas River to Lyons, Kansas. Here the Cherokee/Santa Fe Trail approaches US 56 and roughly parallels the highway for the next 80 miles to Kinsley, Kansas. It continues west from Lyons to the town of Ellinwood, on the Arkansas River.

From here, the combined Cherokee/Santa Fe Trail route follows the Arkansas River west to Great Bend, Kansas, where both the river and the trail curve southwest. Upon leaving Great Bend, the trail passes south of the town of Pawnee Rock to Larned, Kansas. There, emigrants crossed the Pawnee River. The route follows the US 56 alignment southwest past Garfield and Kinsley, where the trail leaves US 56, to the site of Black Pool. Black Pool is a spring where the 1850 Cherokee party carved inscriptions into a rock, although inscriptions that are visible there today are believed to post-date the trails era.

Still following the north bank of the Arkansas River, the Cherokee/Santa Fe Trail bends northwesterly toward historic Fort Dodge and Dodge City, Kansas. It continues upriver past the town of Cimarron and through Garden City, Deerfield, Syracuse, and Coolidge. About 2 miles beyond Coolidge, the Cherokee/Santa Fe Trail enters Colorado. It passes near the town of Holly, continues west beneath the John Martin Reservoir on the Arkansas River for about 8 miles, and heads west to Bent's Old Fort, an important Santa Fe Trail trading post.<sup>34</sup> Today the reconstructed fort is a national historic site operated by the NPS.

The combined trail runs along the north bank of the Arkansas River for about 6 miles beyond the fort and then divides permanently into separate trails: the Santa Fe Trail crosses the river and turns southwest while the Cherokee Trail stays on the north bank and heads northwest. The Cherokee Trail route passes through Boone, Colorado, crosses Chico Creek, and continues to historic Fort Pueblo. There it turns north and parallels I-25 north along Fountain Creek and the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains. After passing through the town of Fountain, it begins to diverge from the highway and heads north to the trail site of Jimmy Camp (east of Colorado Springs), which was said by many emigrants to have the best spring water on the trail. Trail ruts are still visible at this location. Emigrants here frequently commented on seeing 14,110-foot Pikes Peak, soaring on the horizon 20 miles to the west.

The Cherokee Trail continues north, crossing US 24 to reach the 7,500-foot-elevation divide between the Arkansas and Platte river drainages, about 3 miles southeast of Eastonville. The divide, also known to emigrants as the Black Forest and "the Pineries," provided travelers with wood, shade, game, and good grass and water.

To the north beyond the divide is a 7-mile, mostly intact length of Cherokee Trail where depressions and swales are still visible. Along this segment are found the grave of a teamster who froze to death in a snowstorm in 1858 and a natural landmark known as Point of Rocks.

Next, the Cherokee Trail study route goes north to Russellville, the site of an 1858 gold discovery and a later stage station. It continues northwest and then follows Cherry Creek, paralleling CO-83. As it approaches Denver, the study route passes through Cherry Creek State Park and several later stage station sites, some (including the 1864 Four Mile Historic Park) with original buildings and ruins.

- a. In Denver, where Cherry Creek empties into the South Platte River, the Cherokee Trail forks and the two branches diverge:
  - i. **The original 1849 Northern Route** follows the South Platte River north through the city to the historic fur trade post of Fort Lupton, which recently has been reconstructed on-site. It passes through Fort Vasquez, a fur trade post that was reconstructed by the Work Projects Administration on its original site in the 1930s, and goes through Platteville to Fort St. Vrain, another historic fur trade site. There the trail turns northeast with the river, passes La Salle, and continues to the South Platte River crossing located about 5 miles east of Greeley, Colorado, below the mouth of the Cache la Poudre River. Upon crossing the South Platte, the Cherokee Trail turns sharply west, following the north bank of the Cache la Poudre River through Windsor to the mouth of Box Elder Creek. Here the route turns north along the creek, passes through Wellington, and veers west to pass south of Steamboat Rock. It rejoins the 1850 Southern Route a mile southwest of Red Mountain.
  - ii. **The 1850 Southern Route** crosses the South Platte River in Denver and bears north-northwest. It crosses Clear Creek near 56th and Tennyson in northwest Denver and continues north along the Front Range through Broomfield. Here the Cherokee Trail approximates the alignment of US 287 north to Longmont and onward to the Big Thompson River crossing (site of the later Namaqua Stage Station, toll crossing, and

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<sup>34</sup> Bent's Old Fort, Fort Pueblo, Pikes Peak, and Steamboat Rock were sketched by William Quesenbury during his trip along the Cherokee Trail in 1850.

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cemetery) located west of Loveland. It continues north past Fort Collins and crosses the Cache la Poudre River to Laporte.

The 1850 Southern Route continues northwest for about 44 miles, roughly paralleling US 287. About 10 miles beyond Laporte is Bonner Spring, where trail ruts, a child's grave, and the ruins of a later stage station can be seen. The trail continues north past Steamboat Rock, a trailside landmark, to converge with the 1849 Northern Route a mile southwest of Red Mountain.

Four miles beyond Steamboat Rock, the faint trace of original trail stretches over about 2 miles toward Virginia Dale, where the original stage station still stands. The Cherokee Trail study route crosses into Wyoming 2 miles northwest of Virginia Dale. Two miles beyond the state boundary begins an intermittent, 4-mile length of original trail swale across the Laramie Mountains.

- b. Now the Cherokee Trail study route descends Grant Creek and continues to a point 3 miles northwest of Tie Siding, where the 1849 Northern and 1850 Southern routes diverge for the second and final time at Willow Creek, the site of an emigrant campground and a later stage station.
  - i. **The 1849 Northern Route** goes northwest across the Laramie Plains. A 27-mile stretch of 20th-century roads and original trail remnants begins four and a half miles beyond the trail fork. About 8 miles into this stretch, the route crosses the Laramie River and then continues another 14 miles to cross the Little Laramie River. Both are sites of later stage stations. The trail remnant ends as it approaches I-80 south of Sevenmile Creek, but the study route continues for 18 miles along the freeway to Arlington, Wyoming, where the remains of a stage station are located. It goes northwest from there for 5 miles around the north side of Sheepherder Hill and then makes a 90-degree turn southwest to cross I-80 and Wagonhound Creek. Beyond the creek, the route makes a second 90-degree turn and heads westerly, crossing the Medicine Bow River. It goes through Pass Creek Canyon between Coad and Elk mountains and continues west to cross WY-130. There the 1849 Northern Route of the Cherokee Trail enters an extensive range of "checkerboard" land ownership, consisting of alternating sections of federal and private lands.

A mile and a half past WY-130 and within the checkerboard area begins a 5-mile stretch of primitive road, the Johnson Ranch Road, which has been identified by some researchers as the Cherokee Trail. This descends from the tableland to a crossing of the North Platte River upstream from Sheep Rock. Three miles beyond the crossing lies a 2-mile stretch of deep swale and a primitive ranch road that Fletcher et al. believe follows the original trail route.

*Here emerges a difference of opinion regarding the route of the 1849 Cherokee party.* Fletcher et al. studied Fremont's 1843 expedition map and journals (published in 1845), which the Cherokee party used to guide itself through this area; 1849 company members' letters and diaries that generally describe where they went; the map and report of Stansbury's 1850 expedition, which noted the Cherokee party's track from the previous year; and several other historical sources. Based on their analysis of these materials, the researchers trace the company's route west across Sage Creek to pass just south of today's Kindt Reservoir, and then continuing west across the Kindt Basin to Little Sage Creek. From there, they believe the company's route swings northwest to Sheep Mountain and then turns north through Rawlins, Wyoming, before starting west into the Great Divide Basin.

However, Michael Oberndorf, BLM archeologist with the Rawlins Field Office, suggests that Fletcher et al. have misinterpreted Fremont's and Stansbury's records and have

overlooked important features of the physical terrain that would influence the company's direction of travel. Based on his own study of the historic documentation, Oberndorf puts the Sage Creek crossing several miles farther west and 1 to 2 miles south of Kindt Reservoir. From the crossing, he postulates, the party then would have proceeded northwest across the Kindt Basin toward the Atlantic Rim escarpment instead of turning north toward Rawlins.

"When [the 1849 Cherokee company] left the Kindt Basin, giving up trying to continue due west because of a lack of water and grass in that direction, they would have gone to the northwest where they would have intersected Separation Creek and then Sugar Creek and at least two springs," writes Oberndorf (2014:4). "They were sending out scouts every day, and would have been aware of where water was, just as they were aware of where it wasn't." He thinks the company most likely crossed the Atlantic Rim escarpment through a gap that is "clearly visible on [Fremont's] map and from the Evans party's probable camp location for July 17." If he is correct, the company crossed the escarpment 3 to 4 miles northeast of Bridger Pass. In further support of his hypothesis, Oberndorf cites Erb, Brown, and Hughes (1989). These authors, informed by historical documentation and by a relative who wrote in 1935 that she had "seen it [the Evans-Cherokee Route] often," state that the 1849 Northern Cherokee Route "pass[ed] over the Continental Divide at about Jepp's [today, Jep] Canyon" (Erb et al. 1989:83, 36).

"That would put it pretty much where Stansbury had it drawn on his map. It likely then went down Bitter Creek to Point of Rocks, but this is yet to be seen," writes Oberndorf (personal communication, 4/10/2014). "In any case, it appears more and more likely that the trail stayed far south of where the Fletchers have it mapped."

From the Atlantic Rim crossing, the party would have continued northwesterly, passing 5 to 10 miles west of modern-day Rawlins before heading west toward the Great Divide Basin. But beyond a couple of key locations (the Sage Creek crossing area and the gap through Atlantic Rim), Oberndorf says their route of travel cannot reasonably be identified until field investigations are conducted to look for physical evidence. Accordingly, only the Atlantic Rim gap and the general direction of travel suggested by Oberndorf are represented on the feasibility study map for the Cherokee Trail.

From the general vicinity of Rawlins, the 1849 Northern Route of the Cherokee Trail (as mapped by Fletcher et al.) heads west across the Shamrock Hills and the Great Divide Basin to Monument Lake. This leg of the route is interpolated based on emigrant journals and GLO plats. It crosses the Red Desert Basin (still checkerboard ownership), and then strikes Deadman Wash, which it follows south around Point of Rocks, a major trail landmark with historic ruins, an inscription rock, and a restored stage station. From here the Northern Route of the Cherokee trail follows the north bank of Bitter Creek toward Rock Springs, Wyoming.

In Rock Springs, the 1849 Northern Route of the Cherokee Trail turns north along Killpecker Creek and runs along the foot of White Mountain. Portions of the trail along this stretch are 3 to 4 feet deep and 15 feet wide (P. Del Bene, personal communication, 5/29/2014). The route continues over a pass (locally known as 14 Mile Hill) across White Mountain, where archeologists recorded a braided drainage crossing. Five miles west of this pass begins another 10-mile stretch of trail remnant to Twentyfive Draw. From there the route continues west to cross the Green River at Stevens Flat. Beyond the river, the study route goes west-southwest across checkerboard lands to a junction with the combined California, Oregon, Mormon Pioneer, and Pony Express trail corridor. This important trail junction, the terminus of the Northern Branch of the Cherokee Trail, is located about 5 miles northeast of Granger, Wyoming. From here, Cherokee Trail

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travelers joined the main California Trail to Fort Bridger, where the Southern Branch of the Cherokee Trail ends.

- ii. **The 1850 Southern Route** turns southwest from the second trail split near modern Tie Siding, and crosses numerous creeks. It passes between Red Mountain and Ring Mountain to cross the Laramie River, and then continues west along the north side of Boswell Creek. Unpaved roads follow the original corridor across BLM lands and through the Medicine Bow National Forest for 7 miles along Boswell Creek. Recent (2010 and 2011) USFS Passports in Time archeological projects west of the Laramie River and north of Boswell Creek have documented abundant evidence of the emigration along 4 of the 7 miles of trail. The segment ends about one and a half miles before the route intersects WY-230 near Mountain Home, Wyoming.

Now the 1850 Southern Route heads west, crosses the summit of the Medicine Bow Mountains (at 8,110 feet in elevation, the highest point on the Cherokee Trail), and reenters Colorado. The route follows Lawrence Creek to a pass between Sentinel Mountain and Dean Peak. Once through the pass, the route turns northwest across North Park, crosses the North Platte River northwest of Watson Mountain and reenters Wyoming. Continuing northwest, the route crosses numerous creeks. Southeast of Encampment, Wyoming, lies a 6-mile stretch of intermittent ruts, primitive road, and county road. It crosses the Encampment River and continues northwest across WY-230 and numerous creeks. West of Jack Creek and north of the Medicine Bow National Forest lies a 7-mile segment of trail ruts that parallels Jack Creek Road across the Willow Creek drainage. A two-track road believed to be on the original trail alignment leads over the Continental Divide between groves of aspens known as Twin Groves.

The route continues southwest past the trail landmark of Five Buttes, follows Cherokee Creek west, and crosses south-flowing Muddy Creek about 13 miles north of Baggs. It contours northwest around North Flat Top, heads south to cross Sand Creek, and turns west to climb Powder Rim. Approximately 19 miles of the 1850 Southern Route, including parallel variants, have been surveyed and mapped from the vicinity of Five Buttes to about 2 miles west of WY-789 (Johnson 2006a). This segment includes about 13 miles of intact trail. Another 14 miles of trail, with parallel variants, were surveyed and mapped between Blue Gap Draw and Hangout Wash, including about 6 miles of original trail (Johnson 2008). Thirty-two miles more of trail, including parallel variants, have been surveyed and professionally mapped between Hangout Wash and the west end of Powder Rim. These include nearly 12 miles of remnant trail and about 20 miles of modern roads “utilizing the same ridge crests and benches which would have been the optimal route for mid-nineteenth century traffic” (Johnson 2011:67).

On Powder Rim, a BLM road follows the historic trail route along the rim and around both sides of Powder Mountain. The route descends to Lower Powder Spring (Sulphur Spring), and an unpaved road follows the route across BLM lands for the next 7 miles to Shell Creek, site of two 1852 emigrant graves. Approximately 27 miles of the 1850 Southern Route have been surveyed and mapped by the Rock Springs Field Office of the BLM from a mile west of Shell Creek to Salt Wells Creek.

After crossing Alkali Creek, public and private unpaved roads follow the original trail alignment for 10 miles along Vermillion Creek (where it crosses WY-430) and its north fork west to Salt Wells Creek. From Salt Wells Creek to the Green River, the trail has been surveyed, mapped, and marked by personnel from BLM’s Rock Springs Field Office and OCTA.

The study route continues west, crossing US 191 north of the Teepee Mountains, and winds northwesterly. Approximately 10 miles beyond the highway crossing, the original



1850 Southern Route enters the southern edge of the checkerboard ownership area. The route continues across alternating areas of public and private ownership for about 10 miles to the Green River, where the original wagon crossing is submerged beneath modern-day Flaming Gorge Reservoir at the mouth of Currant Creek, also known as Buckboard Crossing. Ashley National Forest has completed several field projects to identify and map the location of the Cherokee Trail where it crosses the Green River within the area of Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area (J. Rust, Forest Archaeologist, Ashley National Forest, personal communication, 8/16/2012).

From the west side of the reservoir, the historic route continues west across another 10 miles of alternating land ownership before reentering extensive BLM jurisdiction. West of the river, the 1850 Southern Route of the Cherokee Trail crosses WY-530 and Smiths Fork to end at historic Fort Bridger, which today is a Wyoming State Historic Site.

From here, emigrants along the Cherokee Trail made their way to California over the established trail system.

**Historical Assets:** Numerous places of historical interest occur along the length of the historic Cherokee Trail. This summary provides a sampling of these places.

Coody's Bluff, Oklahoma, was the site of an emigrant campground, a trading post, and a crossing of the Verdigris River by the 1850 Cherokee Trail companies. The bluff is undeveloped and appears much as it did in the mid-1800s. Beason's Swales are a series of parallel wagon swales crossing a farm in southern Kansas. Running Turkey Creek Crossing, south of Galva, Kansas, is an emigrant campground where the 1849 Evans companies inscribed a message on stone. A small monument stands at the site, which is surrounded by woodland. Pawnee Rock, Kansas, was a trail landmark for both the 1849 and 1850 companies and today is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is a Kansas State Historic Site. The site of the Black Pool, near Dodge City, Kansas, where the 1850 party stopped for water and carved inscriptions into a rock, is largely intact on private land. It is listed on the National Register for its association with the Santa Fe Trail. Bent's Old Fort, Colorado, was constructed as a fur trade post in 1833, but it evidently had been destroyed before the wagons arrived in 1849. Today the reconstructed fort is a national historic site and a unit of the National Park System, with interpretation, facilities, and a modern reconstruction of the original fort.

A museum is located near the site of reconstructed Fort Pueblo, where the Cherokee emigrants turned north along the Colorado Front Range of the Rocky Mountains. Blackfoot Cave and its associated spring still exist along the route north of Pueblo, and ruts can be seen near Castle Rock, Colorado. Point of Rocks, also in Colorado, is a 300-foot-high rock bluff on the divide between the Arkansas and Platte rivers, frequently noted in emigrant journals. It is the location from which Cherokee Trail traveler William Quesenbury sketched Pikes Peak in 1850. It is on private property, but a conservation easement protects both the surrounding pasture and adjacent trail trace. Fort Lupton and Fort Vasquez, Colorado, were fur trade posts, and both today are interpreted parks with reconstructed buildings. Steamboat Rock, Colorado, was called Red Mountain by the Cherokee Trail emigrants. The boat-shaped landmark largely retains its historic appearance as documented by Quesenbury's 1850 sketch. Virginia Dale Stage Station, built in 1862 to serve the Overland Stage, still stands near the Colorado/Wyoming border.

Parallel sets of wagon ruts are visible at Twin Groves, a crossing of the Continental Divide west of Saratoga, Wyoming, on the Southern Route of the Cherokee Trail. Lower Powder Spring, historically called Sulphur Spring, was visited by John C. Fremont, Kit Carson, and well-known mountain man traders and trappers. It is located about 62 miles southeast of Rock Springs, Wyoming. The spring is mentioned in an 1850 Southern Route Cherokee Trail diary, but the ruts and swales in that vicinity are attributed to later travelers on the route. The 1852 graves of Arkansans Robert Davidson and the first-born son of Hiram Allen and Mary Jane Plummer are located at Shell Creek on the 1850 Southern Route. The grave of Malinda Armstrong, who died while traveling eastbound along the Southern Route in 1852, can be seen on Trout Creek, east of the Green River. Historic Fort Bridger today is a Wyoming State

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Historic Site and park with some original military buildings and reconstructions of earlier structures. Several trail segments, mostly modern two-tracks in the vicinity of the trail corridor, with some original trail remnants, can be found across Kansas, Colorado, and Wyoming.

**Historical Summary:** Lured by reports of abundant gold in California, Cherokees from the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma and European-Americans from northwestern Arkansas and southwestern Missouri departed in 1849 and 1850 for the California goldfields. Some companies followed existing American Indian, fur trade, and emigrant routes to California, while others pioneered new sections of a road west.

One group of European-American residents from Washington County, Arkansas, and Cherokees from the Cherokee Nation capital of Tahlequah, Oklahoma, formed the 130-member Washington County Gold Mining Company. The adventurers met to organize their company at Grand Saline, a salt-making location for the Cherokee Nation at the confluence of the Grand River and Saline Creek in northeast Oklahoma. Members elected Lewis Evans to serve as captain of the wagon company, and the party set out in late April 1849. (See Fletcher et al. 1999; Fletcher and Fletcher 2001; and Gardner 2002.)

From the Grand (Neosho) River, the Evans Company cut a new wagon route, sometimes called the Evans Road, across northeast Oklahoma and southeast Kansas to the existing Santa Fe Trail. Their route intercepted the Santa Fe Trail at Running Turkey Creek, about 8 miles east of McPherson and a mile south of Galva, Kansas. At the junction of the Evans Road and Santa Fe Trail, the company carved a record of its accomplishment into a rock: “‘CAP’ Evans’ company of 40 wagons and 130 persons...set out for California...and took a route never before traveled.”

The Evans Company then followed the Santa Fe Trail west across Kansas for more than 300 miles to reach Bent’s Old Fort, at that time an important trading post and today a national historic site, in southeastern Colorado. Here the company left the Santa Fe Trail and continued west along the Arkansas River to Pueblo, Colorado, where members split into two separate parties. Thirty men sold their wagons, formed a pack company, hired a knowledgeable guide, and followed an 1830s trapper/trader pack route to Fort Bridger in southwestern Wyoming. (The Cherokee Trail feasibility study route does not include this party’s travels.) The Evans wagon party went north along the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains through present-day Colorado and into Wyoming. After crossing the Laramie Plains, the Evans Company turned west near Medicine Bow Butte (Elk Mountain) and cut a new wagon track across Wyoming’s Red Desert to the Green River. Near today’s community of Granger, Wyoming, the company merged onto the main corridor of the California, Oregon, Mormon Pioneer, and Pony Express trails. This is the terminus of the 1849 Northern Route of the Cherokee Trail. From there the Evans wagon company followed the main trail corridor to Fort Bridger and took the 1846 Hastings Cutoff through Salt Lake City and west over the Great Salt Lake Desert.

Another group of Cherokees and European-Americans headed to California in 1850—so many men and women, in fact, that the *Cherokee Advocate* expounded against going west to find gold (Fletcher et al. 1999). John Lowery Brown of the Cherokee Nation mentioned in his 1850 trail diary at least eight different companies of Cherokees that merged and split along the way; researchers Jack Fletcher and Pat Fletcher put the entire count at 11 companies comprising 123 souls. The groups headed out from the Verdigris River near Coody’s Bluff, farther west than the 1849 point of departure. From the Verdigris River, they followed nearly the same route as Evans’s 1849 company as far as Denver. Along the way, the majority of the gold-seekers joined together into three ox-team companies (Edmonson, Oliver, and Holmes) and a largely horse-and-mule train (McNair/Taylor).

At Denver, Oliver’s company followed the existing 1849 Northern Route northeast toward present-day Greeley and then west along the Cache La Poudre River toward the future site of Fort Collins, Colorado. Instead of doing the same, the Edmonson, Holmes, and McNair/Taylor companies crossed the South Platte River at Denver and opened a new wagon trail north along the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains to the Cache La Poudre River at Fort Collins. For the purposes of this study, the Edmonson-Holmes-McNair/Taylor route is part of the 1850 Southern Route of the Cherokee Trail.

The northern and southern branches of the Cherokee Trail merged northwest of Fort Collins and turned northwesterly toward the Laramie Plains. From there, the gold-seekers cut a new wagon route through the mountainous borderlands of southern Wyoming and northern Colorado, following Indian and trapper trails where only pack animals had gone before. They crossed the North Platte and Encampment rivers and traveled westerly near Twin Groves, using Five Buttes and North Flattop Mountain as pilot landmarks. At Fort Bridger in southwestern Wyoming, the 1850 Cherokee companies merged onto the main corridor of the California, Oregon, Mormon Pioneer, and Pony Express trails to Salt Lake City and on to California. This trail junction is the end of the 1850 Southern Route of the Cherokee Trail for the purposes of this feasibility study.

The Cherokee Trail was used in later years by other travelers. Fletcher and Fletcher (2001:116–117) posit that the trail was particularly popular among emigrants trying to avoid the Kansas/Missouri border troubles after passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854. They write,

The choices were: if approaching north of the ‘funnel’ of trailheads, stay north, traveling to Council Bluffs to take the road on the north side of the Platte River. If approaching south of the ‘funnel’ travel to southwest Missouri, Arkansas, or Indian Territory to take the Evans/Cherokee route. Farther south, take the road west from Fort Smith and stay on southern trails.

Of the three, the Evans/Cherokee route was the best grassed and watered, and still the healthiest. Throughout the years of use, trail-related deaths can be counted on two hands.

In his article on overland travel in 1857, historian Michael Landon (2011:28) argues that the volume of western overland travel for that year is underestimated in part because researchers have focused on the traditional Oregon, California, and Mormon trails and have not considered emigration on the Cherokee. “The Cherokee Trail issue is central to the argument that 1857 emigration is undercounted,” he writes, “because available evidence indicates that many, if not most, of the 1857 emigrants came from the southern states and began their westward trek by way of the Cherokee Trail” (Landon 2011:28). He continues,

Using evidence the trail itself provides, overland trail historians Jack and Pat Fletcher argue that the Cherokee Trail was a major, not peripheral, emigration route. The 1857 documentary sources support their evidence. The large number of emigrants on the Cherokee Trail, primarily from the American south, not only had a significant impact on the 1857 emigration season, but undoubtedly altered or reinforced social and cultural patterns emerging in specific regions of California after they arrived....

[S]ources previously unavailable reveal that the 1857 emigration was not only large, but also that in 1857 the Cherokee Trail served as the primary route for thousands of Americans seeking to remake their lives in the far West.

(Landon 2011:32–33)

Landon was examining overland travel only for 1857, but the overlooked Cherokee Trail may have played a similar role in other years’ emigrations. People traveled the Cherokee for a number of purposes, both eastbound and westbound, and to and from various destinations. For example, some were gold-seekers heading to California and Colorado in the 1850s and to Idaho and Montana in the 1860s. Drovers moving herds of cattle, sheep, horses, and even flocks of turkeys to market went both directions over the Cherokee Trail, especially from 1851 to 1861. Some companies of European converts to the LDS Church landed at Texas ports and migrated to Utah over parts of the Cherokee Trail in the 1850s. Southerners, in particular, preferred the Cherokee Trail because it was more direct for them than going north to depart from the Missouri River jumping-off places. Sections of the trail were utilized, beginning in the early 1860s, as part of the Overland Stage and mail route. Emigrants to California,

## ***Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes***

Oregon, and Utah, particularly those originating from Arkansas, Texas, and other southern states, traveled all or parts of the Cherokee Trail toward their destinations (Fletcher et al. 1999).

Fletcher and Fletcher have examined the diaries, correspondence, reports, and other 19th-century documents (including COED resources) to which they have had access in order to characterize the nature and numbers of travelers over the Cherokee Trail between 1849 and 1883. Their listing, provided to the NPS in 2011 for consideration in this evaluation, includes the various uses and parties described above. Altogether, based on numbers reported in known trail diaries and journals, they show that nearly 7,000 documented people traveled the Cherokee Trail during that period. Undoubtedly there were many other trains and travelers that did not record their journey and so are unaccounted for in this assessment, as is the case for all of the other study routes. Whiteley (1999) names several prominent historical figures and parties that traveled parts of the Cherokee Trail, including travel writer Francis Parkman, the Mississippi Saints (on their detour to Fort Pueblo for the winter of 1846–1847), and Captain Howard Stansbury, first to systematically map much of the American Southwest.

However, Fletcher and Fletcher's listing also includes military and exploration parties, Mormons bound for Salt Lake City, and commercial livestock drives in addition to emigrants to both California and Oregon. Since Congress directed that this trail be studied for addition to the California National Historic Trail, and since the period of significance identified for that national historic trail by the NPS extends to 1869, users whose travel was strictly military, exploratory, or commercial; whose destination was not California; and/or who traveled beyond 1869 are not considered here. Eliminating those (as best they can be identified—the Oregon emigration could not be separated from the California emigration) from the Fletcher and Fletcher analysis, an estimated 5,340 documented emigrants used the trail for travel to California and Oregon between 1849 and 1869. Since California had by far the greater emigration, the majority of those emigrants are assumed to have been heading there.

Physical trail remnants convey different impressions of the volume of traffic on the Cherokee Trail. For example, consulting archeologist Dave Johnson, who has documented several segments of the Cherokee Trail, describes the 1850 Southern Route trail trace as “relatively faint and difficult to locate” (Johnson 2011:20). He concludes, “It would appear that the Cherokee Trail Southern Route saw relatively light traffic which did not create a substantial physical footprint” (Johnson 2011:42).

In contrast, Fletcher and Fletcher and BLM archeologists have documented some deep swales and multiple wagon ruts indicating heavy traffic on portions of the 1850 Southern Route. “Clearly the volume of traffic was not the same as the main Oregon Trail but the trail ruts on the trail in many places are as well developed and deep as the Oregon Trail,” says USFS archeologist Penelope Del Bene, formerly an archeologist with BLM's Rock Springs Field Office. Much of the Southern Route of the Cherokee Trail, she notes, crosses “stony shallow soils that would not show the passage of traffic as easily” as deeper soils; but overall, “the southern Cherokee evidences a pretty robust system with multiple ruts” (P. Del Bene, personal communication, 5/29/2014).

Rawlins Field Office archeologist Patrick Walker (personal communication, 5/20/2014) suggests another reason for variability in the trail trace, observing, “In my experience, one of the reasons there are differences in preservation of the trail remnants in these areas is that some segments were used by later freight and local traffic. Some of these segments were even upgraded by blading and improvements such as early wooden culverts. When you get away from the segments that were maintained through later use, the original Cherokee Trail becomes much less visible and poorly preserved. This may account for the difference in interpretation regarding the amount of emigrant use on the original trail.”

Researchers likewise have reached opposing conclusions concerning the historical significance of the Cherokee Trail. Some, such as the Fletcher research team and the Rock Springs BLM Field Office, with the concurrence of the Wyoming SHPO, consider it to be of national significance. Gardner et al. (2006:37), on the other hand, conclude that it is an interstate trail that contributed to regional development and that it therefore is only of regional significance.

**Conclusion:** In sum, the 1849 and 1850 Cherokee emigrations on the Cherokee Trail from Oklahoma to Wyoming are unique for their documented, systematic involvement of Cherokee Nation members in the California gold rush. Later uses of the trail included commercial freighting and livestock drives and emigration to California, Oregon, Utah, Colorado, and other parts of the West. An estimated 5,340 emigrants used the trail for travel to California and Oregon between 1849 and 1869, with most presumed to have been heading to California. Deep trail swale, multiple routes, and clear trail trace indicative of heavy traffic (some of it probably commercial freighting and local traffic) have been documented on parts of the route; ephemeral trail trace and expanses with no trace have been observed elsewhere; and much of the northern variant has not been systematically surveyed and documented at all. Researchers differ in their judgments of the volume of traffic on the trail, the quality and reliability of historical documentation of the route, and the trail's level of historical significance. However, the Wyoming SHPO has concurred with the BLM that the Cherokee Trail across that state is of national significance.

Across Oklahoma, Kansas, and Colorado, the mapped route is suitable for national historic trail purposes. The southern branch of the trail across Wyoming is much better documented than the northern branch and includes numerous segments of the historic trail and emigration-related trail sites. However, even the southern route is not entirely defined on the basis of traces or landmarks; in particular, the alignment as currently mapped across lands managed by the Kemmerer Field Office has not been confirmed by physical evidence (L. Harrell, personal communication, 5/20/2014). An added complication for the Cherokee Trail across Wyoming is the extensive area of checkerboard land ownership. Some 204 miles of the northern branch crosses the checkerboard area of alternating public and private ownership; the southern branch crosses approximately 25 miles.

Trail-related places of recreational and historical interest are numerous along the length of the trail. They include long segments of trail with intact historical setting, emigrant inscriptions and graves, geographic landmarks, Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site and other reconstructed fur trade-era structures, and Fort Bridger State Historic Site.

Designation of the entire trail, including both the northern and southern routes, would add 1,611 miles to the California National Historic Trail. Of those, 1,246 miles would be new to the National Trails System; the remaining 365 miles of the route are already designated Santa Fe National Historic Trail.

**32b. Cherokee Trail [Selected sections, Oklahoma to Wyoming, plus 1850 Southern Route through Wyoming].** This route description is included in the summary above. This alignment is 1,315 miles long. A placeholder has been added here so that study route numbers in Appendix A will correspond to study route numbers in the main body of this feasibility study.

**32c. Cherokee Trail [Selected sections, Oklahoma to Wyoming, plus 1849 Northern Route through Wyoming].** This route description is included in the summary above. This alignment is 1,276 miles long. A placeholder has been added here so that study route numbers in Appendix A will correspond to study route numbers in the main body of this feasibility study.

**33. Diamond Springs Cutoff.** This 12-mile alternate was developed by emigrants who wished to avoid a rough crossing of Rocky Ridge, located near South Pass in west-central Wyoming. The "cutoff" (actually a detour) took traffic north around the ridge and passed near several springs known today as Diamond Springs. The route is under study for addition to the California, Oregon, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails.

**Route Description:** The Diamond Springs Cutoff study route leaves the main emigrant trail corridor about 2 miles east of Rocky Ridge (and roughly 28 miles south of Lander). After heading northwest for a

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

short distance, the route continues west following a course parallel to the main trail over undulating, dry country interrupted by two or three springs (including Diamond Springs) and small creeks. It rejoins the main trail after crossing Strawberry Creek about 7 miles northeast of Burnt Ranch.

**Historical Assets:** The original trail over Rocky Ridge is visible and is used by handcart reenactors. The Diamond Springs Cutoff today is approximated by a jeep road, and original wagon ruts can be seen north of Rocky Ridge. However, it is unclear whether those are emigrant trail remnants or if they were created by miners on their way to South Pass City.

**Historical Summary:** Rocky Ridge was a difficult challenge in the South Pass area of Wyoming: in 2 miles, the rugged incline, spiked with sharp rocks, rises 700 feet. The Diamond Springs Cutoff provided an alternate route around the ridge. Winfield Scott Ebey, bound for Oregon Country as part of a 10-wagon party in 1854, is the first emigrant known to mention the alternate, writing in his journal, “By taking a new road to the right, we avoided the bad road” over Rocky Ridge (Ebey 1997:109).

In late autumn of 1856, the Willey and Martin Mormon handcart companies experienced bitter cold, snow, and strong winds while crossing over Rocky Ridge, and many men, women, and children died of exposure along the trail through this area. These companies pushed their carts over the ridge, evidently unaware of the alternate route around it. A few miles to the west, a cemetery where a number of the Mormon casualties are buried attests to the hardships they suffered. Today, two large monuments commemorate the Willey and Martin parties, and the trail over the ridge is a place of pilgrimage for Latter-day Saints.

Some Mormon handcart companies traveling after 1856 may have avoided Rocky Ridge by taking the Diamond Springs Cutoff. It remains to be answered, however, why the troubled 1856 companies and many later parties did not use the easier route, since Ebey had observed its existence in 1854. It seems that the alternate was little used and perhaps not easily noticed, and it may have been obscured by snow when the 1856 handcarts passed by. Emigrant Nellie Phelps, writing in 1859 of her party’s passage over Rocky Ridge, made no mention of an alternate route (Phelps 1859). However, 1862 Mormon emigrant Thomas Memmott (1976) noted in his diary that his party “nooned at a spring by the Rocky Ridge,” which may be a reference to Diamond Springs, as there are no springs on the trail over the ridge. On the other hand, Henry Ballard, traveling with an eastbound company out of Salt Lake City in 1864, wrote in his diary that his party “crossed the rocky ridge” (Ballard 1864).

A query of OCTA’s COED emigrant journals database for “Diamond Spring” identified no records for the cutoff. A query on “Rocky Ridge” identified 21 records, but of those, most original sources were not available to the NPS for examination in order to determine the context of the references, and two (Ballard and Phelps) stated or indicated that they crossed directly over the ridge.

Ebey’s note about an alternate route around Rocky Ridge and Memmott’s reference to the spring constitute the only documentation the NPS has located concerning use of the Diamond Springs alternate by overland emigrants. Since Ebey saw and followed that route in 1854, some number of wagons obviously had used it earlier; and no doubt later emigrants, traveling in summer rather than in blizzard conditions, saw and used it but did not bother to mention the detail in their journals.

The cutoff, though, was part of the route used by gold-seekers heading to South Pass City and Atlantic City during the Wyoming gold rush of 1867–68, and this traffic may be largely responsible for the fact that trail trace remains visible along the route.

**Conclusion:** In sum, the Diamond Springs Cutoff received little documented use by California, Oregon, and Mormon emigrants, possibly amounting to several hundred persons. However, mention of the cutoff in journals and correspondence may be rare because it was a minor, historically unnamed cutoff that emigrants did not bother to note in their journals and diaries. Use of the trail is first documented in 1854, and it may have been lightly used through the end of the overland emigration era. It was more heavily used in the late 1860s by miners heading to South Pass City. The area of Diamond Springs is of

recreational and historic interest to trail visitors, and the associated trail over nearby Rocky Ridge is a pilgrimage destination for LDS Church members.

Designation of this route would add 12 new miles each to the Oregon, California, and Mormon Pioneer national historic trails and to the National Trails System.

**34. Sublette Cutoff.** The Sublette Cutoff, totaling about 206 miles including several variants, allowed emigrants to avoid many miles of unnecessary travel south to Fort Bridger, Wyoming. It begins at Parting of the Ways in western Wyoming, cuts west across Sublettes Flat and the Little Colorado Desert, and rejoins the main trail corridor near the town of Cokeville, Wyoming.

The Sublette Cutoff is already part of the designated California National Historic Trail and is under study for addition to the Oregon National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** At the Parting of the Ways in western Wyoming, the Oregon and California trail corridor begins a long dip southwest to Fort Bridger and then northwest to Fort Hall. The Sublette Cutoff study route, however, strikes due west from Parting of the Ways, creating a shortcut that resembles the top line of a rough triangle.

- a. Some emigrants took the right fork at the Parting of the Ways, following the main branch of the Sublette Cutoff west to a crossing of the Little Sandy River. They continued westerly to cross the Big Sandy River about a mile southeast of today's Big Sandy Reservoir. From that crossing the Sublette Cutoff goes west to the alignment of US 191.
- b. Other emigrants took the left fork at Parting of the Ways, continuing southwesterly on the original California-Oregon trail corridor to an alternate crossing of the Little Sandy River. This crossing is located south of Eden Reservoir and about 4 miles south of the main Sublette Cutoff crossing of the Little Sandy. From there they cut northwest to join the main Sublette at US 191.

From US 191, the Sublette Cutoff study route heads west for a 45-mile "dry drive" across the Green River Desert, traversing several deep canyons (East Buckhorn Draw, West Buckhorn Draw, and Buckhorn Canyon) along the way. The route crosses today's Lincoln/Sweetwater county line and descends to the Green River, where Names Hill Ford and multiple ferry crossings (e.g., Mormon Ferry, Mountain Man Ferry, and the Name Hill Ferry) along the river existed during the emigration era. It continues southwest over Holden Hill and descends to Fontenelle Creek. It follows the north side of Fontenelle Creek for about 2.5 miles, then crosses and continues along the south side of the creek for about 1.5 miles before striking southwest toward Slate Creek Ridge. The trail splits at the eastern foot of the ridge, with a northern variant climbing through Aspen Grove and a southern variant through Pine Grove. The alternates rejoin at Rocky Gap. East of Slate Creek Ridge, a third variant makes a long arc south to reach the Slate Creek Cutoff at Emigrant Spring, then crosses Slate Creek Ridge and rejoins the main Sublette at Rocky Gap.

From Rocky Gap, a trail known as the Dempsey-Hockaday Cutoff leaves the Sublette Cutoff and goes due west across Commissary Ridge and Hams Fork, and then rejoins the Sublette Cutoff on Dempsey Ridge. This cutoff eliminates an unnecessary, long loop of the Sublette Cutoff. The Sublette Cutoff itself, from Rocky Gap, goes southwest along the foot of Commissary Ridge, climbs a pass over the ridge, and descends its west slope to cross Hams Fork. It next climbs a very steep incline onto White Hill and follows that plateau to a second Emigrant Spring on Dempsey Ridge.

- c. Northwest of the Dempsey Ridge Emigrant Spring, the trail splits into three alternates.
  - i. **The first alternate**, here considered the primary branch of the Sublette Cutoff, descends Dempsey Ridge along a ravine called "The Devil's Gangway" and goes north along Trail Creek. Three miles south of Cokeville, Wyoming, it joins the primary route of the Oregon and California trail heading to Fort Hall.

## Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes

- ii. **The second alternate** heads north atop Dempsey Ridge for about four and a half miles and then turns west, descends the ridge, and crosses Rock Creek. It climbs over the south end of Rock Creek Ridge and meets the main Sublette Cutoff 2 miles southeast of its junction with the primary route of the Oregon and California trail.
- iii. **The third alternate** continues up Dempsey Ridge for another mile, where the Dempsey-Hockaday Cutoff comes in from the east and joins the Sublette. This alternate then goes over the north end of Rock Creek Ridge and merges with the primary Oregon and California trail just south of Big Hill at Cokeville, Wyoming.

**Historical Assets:** Wagon trail remnants exist in many places along the Sublette Cutoff, including along the Dry Drive, Quakenasp Canyon, White Hill (where a monument and interpretive sign are located), Commissary Ridge, between Sullivan Hollow and Hams Fork, and between Hams Fork Plateau and the west base of Rock Creek Ridge. Other trail-related places of historic interest include the historic Parting of the Ways and a roadside interpretive pullout, the Green River crossings, emigrant inscriptions at Holden Hill, and several emigrant graves.

**Historical Summary:** The precise origin of the Sublette Cutoff is murky. Some researchers attribute the original blazing of the trail to mountain man William Sublette, some to Isaac Hitchcock, and others to Caleb Greenwood (see Bagley 2010:224). Regardless of which man deserves credit for blazing the route, the California-bound Stevens-Townsend-Murphy party, guided by both Hitchcock and Greenwood, opened the way to wagon traffic in 1844 (Wyoming SHPO 2012). Their route went directly across the 40-mile Green River Desert (also called the Little Colorado Desert) to the Green River, bypassing Fort Bridger.

“Greenwood’s Cutoff” quickly became the preferred route because it bypassed Fort Bridger and shaved some 50 miles and five to seven days’ travel off the trip (BLM 1986:34). Emigrants to the Oregon Country used the cutoff regularly beginning in 1844, and by 1848, trappers and Mormons had established ferries on the Green River to serve the profitable traffic that came that way. That year, some Oregon-bound emigrants, including Isaac Neff Ebey, left their inscribed names on a signature rock at Holden Hill, west of the Green River.

In 1849, however, only about 450 emigrants headed overland to Oregon, whereas some 25,000 set out for the California goldfields (Unruh 1979:85). Historian George Stewart (1962:247) estimates that two-thirds of the total emigration that year followed Greenwood’s Cutoff, in large part because Joseph Ware described the route in his 1849 publication, *Emigrant’s Guide to California*. Ware had never traveled overland to California himself but relied on Solomon Sublette, brother of the famous mountaineer William Sublette, for his information concerning the route. Accordingly, in his book Ware called it “Sublette’s Cutoff,” and widespread use of the guide by Forty-niners ensured that the new name would stick.

Emigration to Oregon over the cutoff and its variants crashed in 1849–1851, when the trail was dominated by California gold-rushers. Use of the route by Oregon-bound emigrants picked up again in 1851–1853, attributable to settlers hurrying to stake claims under the Donation Land Claim Act of 1850. The overall volume of traffic, however, declined as the California gold rush drew to a close and as alternate routes opened across Wyoming. For example, in 1857 the Lander Road began diverting traffic to the north, and at its completion two years later, the new road was drawing substantial traffic away from the Sublette Cutoff. Completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 nudged the continuing shift from covered wagons to railroad travel. The BLM reports that the “last known covered wagon to traverse the Sublette was in 1912” (BLM 1986:34).<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> BLM Pinedale Field Office archeologist David Crowley notes, “This should not be taken to mean that the covered wagon was an ‘emigrant wagon.’ In fact, other supporting historical documents suggest that use of covered wagons by local residents ended by 1912 as the automobile became more widespread” (D. Crowley, personal communication, 5/30/2014).



Evans-Hatch (2004c) identified more than 40 diaries, letters, and reminiscences referencing this route from the 1852 Oregon emigration and more than 33 such documents for the 1853 emigration. A query of OCTA's COED database using the location codes for Sublette/Greenwood and its feeder routes (Slate Creek, Baker-Davis Road, and Kinney Cutoff) identified 205 Oregon Trail records, with the majority of those dating to 1852 and 1853. Employing Mattes's ratio of 250 emigrants per trail record suggests that an estimated 51,455 Oregon-bound emigrants used this cutoff. That estimate is probably too high, considering that the total Oregon emigration between 1844 and 1860 amounted only to about 52,000 (Unruh 1979:85). Clearly, however, a substantial majority amounting to tens of thousands of emigrants followed the Sublette Cutoff on their way to Oregon.

**Conclusion:** In sum, historical documentation substantiates that a high proportion of the Oregon traffic, beginning as early as 1844 and peaking in the early 1850s, followed the Sublette Cutoff. Trail-related places of recreational and historical interest include trail remnants with intact historical setting; several interpretive pullouts; the historic Parting of the Ways where traffic bound for California and Oregon took different directions; and emigrant campgrounds, graves and inscriptions, and geographic landmarks.

Designation of this route would add 206 miles to the Oregon NHT but no new miles to the National Trails System, as the Sublette Cutoff is already designated California National Historic Trail.

**35a. Central Overland Route (Central Overland Emigrant Routes, or COER) [Original study routes, complete complex].** This feasibility study route is not the central Overland Stage route from Atchison, Kansas, to California, but rather is a network of emigration-related connecting routes across the central and western US, situated between the North Platte River to the north and the Arkansas River to the south. These routes have different development histories and historical contexts. They cross Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, and Nevada, often following portions of the Pony Express Trail, the route of the Overland Stage Line, the Simpson military route across Utah and Nevada, parts of the 1849–1850 Cherokee Trail, the 1856–57 Lodgepole Creek Trail, the 1849 Sweetwater Cutoff, and the South Platte River Route. This study route network is more appropriately called the Central Overland Emigrant Routes (COER), and is so referenced here.<sup>36</sup>

In all, the COER network comprises approximately 1,785 miles of wagon trail. Designation of all proposed routes of the COER, which is under consideration for addition to the California National Historic Trail, would add about 1,157 new miles to the National Trails System. Approximately 592 COER miles, mostly across Utah and Nevada, are already part of the designated Pony Express National Historic Trail; and approximately 36 miles in Nebraska and Colorado are already part of the California NHT.

**Route Description:** The network of COER routes is described here by route and trail section (where applicable). The COER study routes complex stretches from Colorado across Wyoming, Utah, and Nevada, and ends in California. For analytical purposes, the complex is split into components, which are described individually below.

The COER begins at the New Upper California Crossing of the South Platte River near Ovid, Colorado, approximately 5 miles southwest of Julesburg. At this crossing, the study route immediately splits into two branches: the COER-South Platte River Route (and route of the Overland Stage), which continues

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<sup>36</sup> Historians Jack Fletcher and Pat Fletcher explain the confusion over the name "Overland Trail" thus: "[T]he name 'The Overland Trail' ...was not tacked on to the Holladay stage and mail route until about 1959–60 (see L.C. Bishop maps in Wyoming archives; he called it 'Emigrant and Stage Road'). Shortly afterward, [Oregon Trail historian] Paul Henderson somehow convinced the [US Geological Survey] to put 'Overland Trail' on the maps and it has stayed, especially in Wyoming" (J. Fletcher and P. Fletcher, personal communication, 3/15/2012).

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

west along the south side of the river; and the COER-Lodgepole Creek Route, which turns north along the Julesburg Cutoff of the designated California and Pony Express national historic trails.

- a. **The South Platte River Route** heads southwest, following the south bank of the South Platte River for about 50 miles to Sterling, Colorado. It continues along the bottomlands between the bluff and the South Platte another 44 miles to Fort Morgan. Here both the river and the trail curve northwesterly. At the mouth of the Cache la Poudre River, the route crosses the South Platte and soon joins the 1849 Northern Route of the Cherokee Trail.<sup>37</sup> The COER is coincident with the 1849 Northern Route of the Cherokee Trail along the north side of the Cache la Poudre River. This combined route passes north of Greeley, Colorado, and goes through Windsor to Box Elder Creek, where the route splits into two variants.
  - i. **South Platte River Route Variant** continues up the river to Laporte, where the 1850 Southern Route of the Cherokee Trail joins. Now the South Platte River Route and the 1850 Southern Route of the Cherokee Trail together turn north up the US 287 corridor, pass Bonner Spring, and merge with the Box Elder Creek route a mile southwest of Red Mountain in Colorado.
  - ii. **Box Elder Creek Variant** is coincident with the 1849 Northern Route of the Cherokee Trail, heading north up Box Elder Creek and passing through Wellington. North of Park Creek Reservoir the combined route turns west, away from Box Elder Creek, to pass south of Steamboat Rock. It rejoins the South Platte River/1850 Southern Cherokee route a mile southwest of Red Mountain in Colorado.

The recombined South Platte River Route/Northern and Southern Cherokee route continues northwest past Virginia Dale Stage Station, bears northwest into Wyoming, then climbs over Laramie Mountains Summit and passes Tie Siding. Three miles beyond the siding, the 1850 Southern Route of the Cherokee Trail branches off to the west; however, the combined South Platte River Route/1849 Northern Cherokee Trail continues northwest across the Laramie Plains (Wyoming) to cross the Laramie River about 7 miles southwest of Laramie, Wyoming. The route then crosses a marshy area that emigrants called the Big Hollow and continues northwest to the Little Laramie River crossing. Here the Lodgepole Creek and South Platte River routes meet. The South Platte River Route section ends at this junction.

- b. **The Lodgepole Creek Trail** begins at the New California Crossing of the South Platte River, at Ovid, Colorado. Over the next 34 miles, the study route heads west coincident with the Pony Express National Historic Trail and the Julesburg Cutoff of the California National Historic Trail; these would not be new miles if added to the National Trails System but are described here for purposes of clarity. The route goes up the south side of Lodgepole Creek for about 4 miles, reenters Nebraska, and continues to the Pole Creek Pony Express Station site 4 miles east of Sidney, Nebraska. There the Pony Express and Julesburg Cutoff turn north. The Lodgepole Creek Route, however, continues west along the creek through Sidney and past Kimball, to enter Wyoming east of the town of Pine Bluffs. It crosses I-25 about 12 miles north of Cheyenne, Wyoming, goes over Cheyenne Pass north of Mesa Mountain, and crosses the Laramie Mountains in Medicine Bow National Forest. Now the route turns northwest and passes 3 miles south of Laramie to the Little Laramie River, where it meets the South Platte River/1849 Northern Cherokee route of the COER network. The Lodgepole Trail component of the COER terminates at that junction, but the trail continues west along the Little Laramie River to Sage Creek route.

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<sup>37</sup> Both the 1849 Northern Route and the 1850 Southern Route of the Cherokee Trail are under consideration for addition to the California NHT and are discussed elsewhere in this document.

c. **Little Laramie River to Sage Creek, Sweetwater Cutoff, Sage Creek Station to Granger, and Salt Lake to Faust's Station** components are as follows:

- i. **Little Laramie River to Little Sage Creek, Wyoming.** From the junction of the South Platte River and Lodgepole Creek routes, this section of the COER runs northwest to Rock Creek Overland Stage Station at Arlington, Wyoming. The route continues across Wagonhound Creek to Bear Creek, where the trail splits into two variants. These run about 35 miles on either side of Elk Mountain in Wyoming.
  - (a) **The northern variant**, which is the historic stage route, crosses Medicine Bow River, passes Fort Halleck, and crosses the North Platte River north of Johnson Island. This variant does not share corridor with the Cherokee Trail study route.
  - (b) **The southern variant**, staying on the general alignment of the 1849 Northern Route of the Cherokee Trail, crosses the Medicine Bow River and follows Pass Creek Canyon around the south side of Elk Mountain. It fords the North Platte River 5 miles downstream of the crossing of the northern variant.

The two variants rejoin a mile west of the North Platte River. The COER-Little Laramie River to Little Sage Creek/1849 Northern Cherokee route continues west past Kindt Reservoir to Sage Creek Stage Station on Miller Creek in Wyoming. Between the North Platte River and Sage Creek Station are about 25 miles of faint trail trace, wagon swale, wheel ruts, and two-track road along the original trail alignment, as well as three stage station sites (with no architectural remains) and a trailside cemetery (Barclay 2011).

At Sage Creek Station, the 1849 Northern Route of the Cherokee Trail/Sweetwater Cutoff heads north to join the primary route of the Oregon and California trails on the Sweetwater River, while the Sage Creek Station to Granger segment of the COER continues west.

- ii. **Sweetwater Cutoff, Wyoming.** According to researchers Fletcher and Fletcher, the 1849 Northern Route of the Cherokee Trail/COER turns north from Little Sage Creek and goes to Rawlins, Wyoming, where it crosses I-80. Three miles north of Rawlins, by their map, the Sweetwater Cutoff branch of the COER splits away from the Cherokee Trail to continue north, paralleling US 287. The Sweetwater Cutoff leaves the highway at Cress Creek, passes through Whiskey Gap in the Ferris Mountains, and turns northwest. It then parallels US 287 to the northwest and reaches its junction with the primary route of the Oregon and California national historic trails 2 miles west of the Fremont-Natrona County Line.

However, the BLM's Rawlins Field Office believes that the Cherokee Trail did not turn north at Little Sage Creek, which brings the purported trail split at Rawlins into question. This and other questions surrounding the Sweetwater Cutoff are discussed in the historical summary below.<sup>38</sup>

- iii. **Sage Creek Station to Granger, Wyoming.** From here, the COER was used by the Overland Stage Line, and multiple historic stage station sites are located at regular intervals along the way. In 1865 this stretch of Overland Stage trail was the scene of numerous skirmishes between the 11th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry and Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho warriors who were harrying stage stations and travelers along the route. The entire segment, like much of the 1849 Northern Route of the Cherokee Trail, crosses the Wyoming "checkerboard" of alternating sections of federal and private lands.

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<sup>38</sup> Rawlins Field Office archeologist Michael Oberndorf proposes that the 1849 Northern Route of the Cherokee Trail stayed well south of Rawlins. See discussion on pages 82–83.

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

Beginning at Sage Creek Station, the route goes 4 miles to WY-71, where a narrow, unpaved county road follows the general course of the COER for 12 miles through Bridger Pass and over the Continental Divide. Along this dirt road are found wagon swales and ruts, as well as subtle vegetation changes resulting from soil compaction caused by wagon traffic. Bridger Pass, with an elevation of more than 7,000 feet, provided an alternative to South Pass as a wagon-friendly passage across the Continental Divide.

The route follows the descent of Muddy Creek for 16 miles. Along this stretch, archeologists have documented about 11 miles of wagon swale, in places nearly a meter deep, and two-track road on the original trail alignment. Also associated with the trail through this area are a National Register-listed stage station ruin and an emigrant inscription rock (Johnson 2006b).

The route next leaves the creek and heads west to Fort LaCledé on Bitter Creek, passing two station sites along the way.<sup>39</sup> From there, the route mostly follows Bitter Creek northwesterly, passing the Big Pond and Black Butte station ruins, for about 31 miles to Point of Rocks. The Point of Rocks Stage Station just off today's I-80 has been restored and is interpreted for the public. Between Muddy Creek and Point of Rocks, archeologists have documented about 14 miles of National Register-eligible Overland Trail remnants (Johnson et al. 2005).

At this locale, Bitter Creek turns west and the COER continues along its south bank, while the 1849 Northern Route of the Cherokee Trail enters from the north and follows the creek's north bank. Also on the north side of the creek is I-80, which shares the trail corridor for the next 40 miles.

Four miles east of Rock Springs, Wyoming, the COER-Sage Creek Station to Granger route crosses to the north side of Bitter Creek and briefly merges with the 1849 Northern Route of the Cherokee Trail. At Rock Springs the two trails split again, with the Cherokee taking a northerly course across White Mountain and the COER following Muddy Creek around the south end of the formation. The COER-Sage Creek Station to Granger route crosses the Green River at the town of Green River and continues to Blacks Fork. It follows the creek for 14 miles to an important trail junction near Granger, Wyoming, where the COER and the combined routes of the Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer, and Pony Express national historic trails come together and continue as a single corridor to Fort Bridger.

From there, emigrants followed the existing California, Pony Express, and Mormon Pioneer NHT along the Hastings Cutoff to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake, where the COER resumes.

- iv. **Salt Lake City to Faust's Station, Utah.** Two Central Overland Emigration Routes developed from Salt Lake City west to Faust's Station. For the purposes of this study, they begin on the currently designated California and Pony Express national historic trails at the historic location of Salt Lake House on Main Street.

- (a) **Salt Lake City to Faust's Station via Camp Floyd (including beginning of the Simpson Route).** This section leaves Salt Lake City following the primary route of the Pony Express south down State Street for 16 miles. It veers west, follows a circuitous route around the constriction of the Jordan Narrows, and finally crosses the Jordan River at Indian Ford. The route then cuts southwest to Camp Floyd,

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<sup>39</sup> Recent research strongly argues that "Fort LaCledé" was not an actual military fort but more likely a fortified stage station built around 1862 for Ben Holladay's Overland Stage (R. Tanner, personal communication, 4/12/2012).

which today is a state park. Now the trail is in basin-and-range country, where rows of mountain ranges separate broad valleys.

From Camp Floyd, the route is approximated by a county road, which often directly overlies the trail. The COER/Pony Express Trail crosses the south end of the Oquirrh Mountains at Five-mile Pass and continues southwesterly across Rush Valley to Faust's Station, approximately eight miles southwest of the Tooele Army Depot "South Area." The segment between Camp Floyd and Faust's Station was opened by Captain James Simpson in 1859. Nine diarists chronicled this route (Petersen 2012:22).

- (b) **Salt Lake City to Faust's Station via Tooele Valley.** By July 1860, emigrants were using an alternate route between Salt Lake City and Faust's Station in Rush Valley. This route goes west from Salt Lake City, following the Hastings Cutoff of the designated California National Historic Trail, and skirting the southeastern shore of the Great Salt Lake. In the vicinity of Lake Point, this COER route branches off to the south and passes through the settlement of Tooele on its way to Faust's Station, where it joined the COER-Camp Floyd alternate described above. The Tooele Valley alternate became the primary trail after Camp Floyd closed in 1861, and 15 emigrant diaries chronicle its use (Petersen 2012:22). The Overland Stage used this route, as well, beginning in 1866 (Townley 1994:205).
- d. **Simpson Route.** From Faust's Station, the COER largely follows Captain Jame's Simpson's 1859 westbound route to Carson City, but it also includes short segments of his return route and later Pony Express and Overland Stage variants. For simplicity, here the COER routes from Faust's to Carson City is collectively called the Simpson Route.
  - i. **Faust's Station to Fish Springs Section of the Simpson Route.** The Simpson Route continues over Lookout Pass between the Onaqui and Sheeprock Mountains. It turns northwest around the north end of the Sheeprock range. Here travelers had a choice.
    - (a) **Stage Route Variant.** This variant follows the stagecoach route southwesterly to Simpson Springs, where a reconstructed Pony Express station stands today. Beyond Simpson Springs, the trail continues west along the Pony Express and stage route to Old Riverbed Station, about a mile north of Table Mountain and seven miles southwest of Simpson Springs. Petersen (2012:22) cites five emigrant diarists who wrote of taking this route.
    - (b) **Indian Spring Variant.** West of Lookout Pass, a road constructed in 1862 by soldiers commanded by Colonel Patrick Connor splits away from the Pony Express route and heads southwest across the southern end of Skull Valley. It then climbs into the Simpson Mountains to arrive at Indian Spring, a significant recruiting area for livestock and emigrants who would soon be crossing the Great Salt Lake Desert. Beyond Indian Spring, this variant descends the western slope of the Simpson Mountains and rejoins the stage route at Old Riverbed Station.<sup>40</sup> Petersen counts 16 emigrant diaries that describe travel over this route.

From Old Riverbed Station, the combined route continues southwesterly across Dugway Valley, past Dugway Station, and over Dugway Pass, which is between the Dugway and Thomas mountain ranges. It then runs west around the north end of the Black Rock Hills to the southwestern edge of Fish Springs National Wildlife Refuge. There the route turns north for two miles to the Fish Springs Pony Express and Overland Stage Station.

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<sup>40</sup> To 19th century emigrants, a recruiting area was a place with plentiful grass and water where draft animals could rest, graze, and recover from their labors.

- ii. **Fish Springs, Utah, to Ruby Valley, Nevada, Section of the Simpson Route.** Leaving Fish Springs, the Simpson Route loops north around the end of the Fish Springs Range. Upon crossing Fish Wash, it splits into two variants.

(a) **Pleasant Valley Variant.** From Fish Wash, this variant (opened by Chorpenning and Simpson) goes southwest across Snake Valley, passes around the south end of the Deep Creek Range, and crosses into Nevada. It enters Pleasant Valley a mile beyond the state line and jogs northwest for seven miles. From there it runs north up Tippet Canyon and then turns west across Antelope Valley to join the Tippet Pass Branch of the Overland Canyon Route east of Tippet Pass, at the south end of the Antelope Range. Petersen (2012:23) identifies one diarist who came this way.

(b) **Overland Canyon Variant.** This variant (opened later by Chorpenning and adopted by the Pony Express) runs northwest across Snake Valley, turns up Overland Canyon, and passes through Pony Express Canyon between Oquirrh Mountain and the Deep Creek Range. It then turns southwest through Ibapah, Utah. Three miles southwest of Ibapah, it enters Nevada and continues southwest across the Goshute Reservation and Antelope Valley. On the west side of Antelope Valley, the route arrives at Antelope Spring, located three and a half miles southwest of Tippet, Nevada, near the foot of the Antelope Range. There the Overland Canyon variant splits further into two branches.

**The Tippet Pass Branch,** used by the Pony Express and the Overland Stage, heads south along the foot of the mountains to join the Pleasant Valley Variant a mile east of Tippet Pass. There it swings northwesterly for about seven miles to the mouth of Stage Canyon, at the eastern foot of the Schell Creek Range. Petersen (2012:23) found three diarists who followed the Tippet Pass Branch.

**The Rock Springs Pass Branch,** a Pony Express summer route, turns northwesterly from Antelope Spring, crosses the Antelope Range at Rock Spring Pass, and joins the Tippet Pass Branch at the mouth of Stage Canyon. Petersen (2012:23) writes that it was steeper but about 3.5 miles shorter than the Tippet Pass Branch. He documents eight diaries written by emigrants who followed the Rock Springs Pass Branch.

Now the Fish Springs to Ruby Valley Segment turns up Stage Canyon and crosses the Schell Creek Range at Schellbourne Pass. It runs northwest across Steptoe Valley, passes through Egan Canyon north of Cocomongo Mountain, and crosses the Cherry Creek Range. About halfway down the western slope of the Cherry Creek Mountains, the route splits again into two variants.

(c) **Pony Express Variant.** The first variant, used by the Pony Express, trends northwesterly across Butte Valley, enters the Butte Range, and continues through the mountains to Pony Spring, where the Butte Pony Express Station was located. The route then descends to the western foot of the Butte Range, where it meets the second branch described below. Petersen identifies 13 diarists who took this route.

(d) **Overland Stage Variant.** The second variant, used by the Overland Stage, runs westerly across Butte Valley, gradually diverging from the Pony Express route described above. It enters the Butte Mountains and continues to Butte Stage Station, located about three miles southwest of Pony Spring, then swings northwest through the mountains to join the Pony Express branch and descend to Long Valley. Petersen identifies two diarists who took this route.

From here the Fish Springs to Ruby Valley segment of the Simpson Route continues northwesterly across Long Valley to enter Murry Canyon. It next crosses the Maverick

Springs Range and emerges into Ruby Valley. This segment of the Simpson Route ends at the Ruby Valley Pony Express and Stage Station on the west side of the valley.

- iii. Ruby Valley to Westgate, Nevada, Section of the Simpson Route.** From Ruby Valley Station the Simpson Route follows the Pony Express westerly across Overland Pass, cuts southwest across Huntington Valley, and crosses a second Overland Pass, through the Diamond Mountains. It descends Telegraph Canyon, continues southwest across Diamond Valley, and passes south of the Sulphur Spring Range and Roberts Mountains. The route continues southwest across Monitor Valley to reach Dry Creek about five miles northeast of Hickison Summit, where it splits.

**(a) Eagle Butte Variant.** This Pony Express variant continues almost directly west, passing south of Eagle Butte, to Simpson Park Canyon. Petersen (2012:23) writes that this route was steeper but seven miles shorter than the Cape Horn Variant. Fourteen diarists passed this way (J. Petersen, personal communication, 07/2012).

**(b) Cape Horn Variant.** This stage route, also used by the Pony Express for four months during the Pyramid Lake War of 1860, heads southwesterly from Dry Creek and becomes coincident with US 50 about two miles northeast of Hickison Summit. It continues southwesterly to Cape Horn, at the south end of the Simpson Park Range, where another split occurs. One branch is described below as the New Austin Variant. The second, original route leaves the highway corridor and turns northwest across Big Smoky Valley to Simpson Park Canyon. There it converges with the Eagle Butte Variant. The U-shaped Cape Horn route was followed by the 1859 Simpson expedition and by English adventurer Richard Burton (1862). Petersen (2012:23) reports two emigrant diaries that describe this route.

From this junction of the Eagle Butte and Cape Horn variants, the recombined route trends northwesterly, following Simpson Park Canyon through the east arm of the Toiyabe Range and crossing the west arm of the same range at Emigrant Pass. It then descends to the Reese River Valley.

**(c) New Austin Variant.** From the vicinity of Cape Horn, this 1864 variant approximates US 50 west across Big Smoky Valley. It crosses the Toiyabe Range through the Toiyabe National Forest at Bob Scotts Summit and Austin Summit and descends to the town of Austin, Nevada. The trail continues to follow US 50 for two miles west of Austin and then heads due west to converge with the Pony Express route at Jacob Station on the Reese River. Petersen (2012:292, 300) indicates that two of his diarists followed this route.

About a mile west of the Reese River crossing, the route splits again.

**(d) Smith Creek/Pony Express Variant.** The route used by the Pony Express, continues southwest across Reese River Valley to cross the Shoshone Mountains at Smith Creek Summit and turns west across Smith Creek Valley. It ascends Smith Creek into the Desatoya Mountains, then turns north to descend along Edwards Creek to Edwards Creek Valley. The route curves north around a spur of the Desatoya Mountains, where it meets the New Pass Variant. Petersen (2012:24) documents three diarists who followed this route.

**(e) New Pass/Stage Route Variant.** This variant, used by the Overland Stage, branches off the Pony Express trail west of the Reese River crossing. About a mile west of the fork, it intercepts US 50 and follows the highway west around the north end of the Shoshone Mountains. It crosses Smith Creek Valley about 10 miles north of the Pony Express route, then climbs through New Pass between the Desatoya and New Pass mountains. The stage road continues southwest across Edwards Creek Valley to

## Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes

rejoin the Pony Express trail about six miles north of Cold Springs station. Two emigrant diarists describe this route (Petersen 2012:24).

Now the combined Pony Express and stage road follows US 50 southwesterly along Rock Creek. It descends Eastgate Wash and continues to Westgate, at the south end of the Clan Alpine Mountains.

- iv. **Westgate to Carson City, Nevada, Section of the Simpson Route.** From Westgate, emigrants continued west along the Pony Express Trail across Stingaree Valley and over Drumm Summit.<sup>41</sup> This route then crosses Fairview Valley, goes over Sand Springs Pass between the Stillwater and Sand Springs ranges, and arrives at Sand Springs Pony Express Station, where station ruins are extant. West of Sand Springs, travelers could choose among three options.

(a) **The Carson Lake North Variant** splits off to the northwest about three miles past Sand Springs Station. It crosses Salt Wells Basin to reach the north shore of Carson Lake, and from there continues northwest across Lahontan Valley to join the Carson Route at Ragtown, north of today's Fallon, Nevada. Petersen (2012:24) identifies seven diarists who chose this route.

(b) **The Bunejug Mountains Variant** splits away from the Pony Express Trail about 12 miles west of Sand Springs at Rock Springs. This route heads northwest to cross the north end of the Bunejug Mountains, and then bears north along the eastern shore of Carson Lake. At the north end of the lake it merges with the Carson Lake North Variant and continues to Ragtown. Petersen (2012:24) cites two diarists who went that way.

(c) **The Carson Lake South Variant** continues west along the Pony Express route across Salt Wells Basin, crosses Simpson Pass between the Bunejug and Cocoon mountains, and passes just south of Carson Lake to the site of Carson Sink Stage Station at US 95. Here travelers could turn north, approximating the alignment of today's US 95 (and also the Bidwell-Bartleson study route) through Fallon to Ragtown, where they could join the Carson Route of the California Trail. Four diarists took this route (Petersen 2012:25).

Alternatively, travelers could continue west across US 95 and pass between the Dead Camel and the Desert mountains. This route then crosses the south end of Churchill Valley, south of Lahontan Reservoir, to arrive at the Carson River opposite Fort Churchill. From there, emigrants could continue into California via the Carson or Walker routes of the California Trail. Five emigrant diarists took this route (Petersen 2012:24).

Emigrants who followed the Simpson Route to the Sierra Nevada but wished to cross into California farther north via Henness Pass or Donner Pass could still do so by turning onto a connector route west of Dayton, Nevada.

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<sup>41</sup> Townley (1994:254) notes that the Overland Stage in 1861 initially followed the Pony Express route south of Carson Lake. However, operators soon opened a new coach road that branched northwest from Westgate and wound through the Stillwater Mountains to today's Stillwater Point Reservoir. From there it turned west and joined the Carson Route of the California Trail at Ragtown. As it was a stagecoach road, emigrants of the 1860s could have used it; however, the route appears to be longer and more rugged than other options and has no obvious advantages over the other routes described above. Jesse Petersen, the primary researcher of emigrant use of the Simpson route, is "not aware of any indication that [the Stillwater stagecoach road] was ever used by covered wagon emigrants" (J. Petersen, personal communication, 09/22/2014). Therefore it is not included here as a COER study route.



- e. **Carson-Truckee Connector Route.** The southern terminus of this connector lies three miles west of Dayton and six miles south of Virginia City, Nevada. From there it follows NV-341 to Silver City and up Gold Canyon to Gold Hill and Virginia City, where it reaches its junction with the Simpson Route Stillwater Variant. The Carson-Truckee Connector continues north over Gerger Summit and turns west to Steamboat, Nevada, where it reaches US 395. It follows the highway corridor northwest to Reno and veers northwest to join the Truckee Route near the town of Lawton, three miles west Reno. This is where the COER ends. From there emigrants would take either the Henness Pass route to Marysville, California, or follow the Truckee Route into California and over Donner Pass to Johnson's Ranch and Sacramento.

For the purposes of this feasibility study, the Central Overland Emigrant Routes, or COER, will be evaluated in five configurations:

35a: COER Original study routes, the complete complex as described above (1,775 miles total).

35b: COER Selected section, only the South Platte River Route as described above (285 miles).

35c: COER Selected section, only the Lodgepole Creek Trail as described above (197.5 miles).

35d: COER Selected sections through Wyoming, consisting of the Little Laramie River to Sage Creek Station route, the Sweetwater Cutoff, and the Sage Creek Station to Granger routes as described above (383 miles total).

35e: COER Selected section, only the Simpson Route and its variants described above (910 miles).

**Historical Assets:** There are dozens of trail-related historical resources of interest to recreational visitors along the 1,783.5 miles of these routes. They include, but are not limited to, the site of Virginia Dale Stage Station in Colorado; Pine Bluffs, Camp Walbach, and Cheyenne Pass on the Lodgepole Creek Trail in eastern Wyoming; remains of Fort Buford (Fort Sanders), south of Laramie, Wyoming; Rock Creek Station in Arlington, Wyoming; the site of Fort Halleck; Bridger Pass; an emigrant inscription register; a number of graves; and stage station ruins and reconstructions on public and private lands across Wyoming. Numerous trail ruts, swale segments, and stage and Pony Express station sites exist across western Utah and eastern Nevada. Other related sites in Utah include Camp Floyd State Park, Lookout Pass, and Fish Springs National Wildlife Refuge.

Specifically along the Lodgepole Creek Trail (approximately 207 miles between the South Platte River, Nebraska, and the Laramie Basin, Wyoming), sparse evidence of the trail still existed in the early years of the twenty-first century, and it may be extant today. Ruts reportedly exist on the Medicine Bow National Forest and on private land west of Laramie (Evans-Hatch 2004b), and Mormon Trail historian Stanley Kimball (1988:153–155) identified wagon ruts through Cheyenne Pass at the time he was researching his book in the mid-1980s. Wyoming historic site markers stand at an 1867 emigrant grave, the site of Camp Walbach, and at Cheyenne Pass (Kimball 1988). Ruts and the grave of a 10-year-old emigrant girl are documented north of Cheyenne.

On the South Platte River Route component of the COER, Fletcher and Fletcher (personal communication, 04/27/2012) report that historical and recreational assets include a remnant of "Fremont's Orchard," a trailside camping place and Overland Stage station site. Also along this route (where it is coincident with the Cherokee Trail) is the Virginia Dale Overland Stage Station.

Sites along the Central Overland Emigrant Trails in Utah include Camp Floyd/Stagecoach Inn State Park near Fairfield, the Pony Express National Back Country Byway administered by the BLM, the Point Lookout Stage Station site, Simpson Springs Pony Express and Stage Station, Fish Springs National Wildlife Refuge, and the ruins of Boyd's and Canyon stage stations.

Across Nevada, trail-related properties of historical and recreational interest on public lands include Egan Canyon, Cold Springs and Sand Springs Pony Express and stagecoach stations, Fort Churchill State Historic Park, and Mormon Station State Historic Park. Some ruins and sites are located on private lands,

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as well. Much of the COER route is accessible to hikers, equestrians, and other recreationists. In addition, Central Overland trail researcher Jesse Petersen reports that he has identified many miles of intact trail remnant across Nevada.

**Historical Summary:** The various components of the COER were developed independently and at different times. Insofar as historical information is available about the components of the COER, they are generally summarized here.

The 1849–1850 Cherokee Trail is the longest and oldest component of the COER. It is a separate feasibility study route, and its historical background, related sites, and emigration history have been described in detail above. However, parts of the COER are coincident with the Cherokee Trail across Wyoming.

Much of the COER across Wyoming, Utah, and Nevada coincides with the route of the Central Overland California and Pikes Peak Express Company (COC&PP) stagecoach operation, which carried mail and passengers to California beginning in 1861. The following year, Ben Holladay acquired the COC&PP and renamed it the Overland Stage Line. That operation continued, with some routing changes, until 1869. The stage stations located along the COER across the intermountain west are relics of that period, and many of them in Utah and Nevada originated with George Chorprenning's mail operation and the 1860–1861 Pony Express.

The 71-mile Sweetwater Cutoff connects the COER/Cherokee Trail (from today's Rawlins, Wyoming, by Fletcher and Fletcher's interpretation) to the main California Trail at the Sweetwater River in Wyoming. According to the Fletchers' research, packers and perhaps emigrant wagon parties were heading north from the Cherokee Trail to join the main Oregon-California trail at the Sweetwater River as early as 1849. In 1857, members of the Baker-Fancher Company, emigrating from Arkansas, went this way to California. They never reached their destination: adult members of the company and their children over eight years of age were murdered at Mountain Meadows, near Cedar City in southern Utah, by Mormon settlers.<sup>42</sup>

Fletcher and Fletcher (in a summary form prepared for this study in 2011) identified 18 emigrant journals and diaries, written between 1849 and 1898, that reference travel from the Cherokee Trail north to the Sweetwater River and thence to the far west via the main Oregon-California trail corridor. Of those journals dating up to 1869, the end of the period of significance under consideration for this study, three indicate a California destination and four indicate a non-California destination (Utah, Washington, and Montana). The destinations of the remaining six writers could not be determined from the materials submitted for this study.

Notably, BLM archeologists from the Rawlins and Lander Field Offices have stated that they are not familiar with the Sweetwater Cutoff and that no physical remnants of the wagon trail as described by Fletcher and Fletcher have been formally documented or observed by BLM personnel within their field office areas (M. Hemphill, personal communication, 5/19/2014; P. Walker, personal communication, 5/20/2014; C. Bromley, personal communication, 5/11/2014). At most, they reasoned, the cutoff described by Fletcher and Fletcher may have served as an occasional route for a few emigrant parties. Moreover, the Rawlins Field Office disputes Fletcher and Fletcher's proposed routing of the 1849 Northern Route of the Cherokee Trail through Rawlins, where Sweetwater Cutoff is supposed to branch off. This point of disagreement is addressed in detail in the Cherokee Trail section of this document.

Through OCTA's COED database and other sources of historical documentation, Fletcher and Fletcher identified 42 emigrant journals referencing travel over Bridger Pass, on the Sage Creek to Granger segment of the COER. Of these, 17 were going to California or the eastern flanks of the Sierra Nevada,

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<sup>42</sup> From Salt Lake City, the Fancher Party turned south, approximating today's I-15 alignment, to reach the Old Spanish Trail in southern Utah. From there they planned to follow the Old Spanish Trail west to California. Their route south from Salt Lake City to the Old Spanish Trail is not part of this study, and the massacre site itself is not on the Sweetwater Cutoff.

and 20 were going to other destinations, primarily Montana, Utah, and Idaho. The destinations of five diarists could not be determined from the materials submitted.

The Lodgepole Creek Trail (also known as the Lodgepole or “Pole” Route) is a 197.5-mile connector between the South Platte River at Ovid, Col., and the vicinity of today’s Laramie, Wyoming. Parts of the Lodgepole Creek route, originally an Indian trail, were used by fur trappers in the 1820s. The route was scouted and mapped in 1850 when mountain man Jim Bridger guided Captain Howard Stansbury, of the US Army Corps of Topographical Engineers, along Lodgepole Creek in southwestern Nebraska and southeastern Wyoming. Stansbury’s objective was to locate a central route that avoided the occasional heavy snows on the more northern Oregon, California, and Mormon trail corridor along the North Platte River (Madsen 1989).

In 1856, Congress directed Lt. Francis T. Bryan, also with the US Army Corps of Topographical Engineers, to reconnoiter the route documented by Stansbury along Lodgepole Creek and across the Continental Divide at Bridger Pass. Bryan reported that the route was a shorter, easier avenue of travel than the trail along the North Platte River: the Lodgepole Creek Trail lay over the so-called “gangplank,” which formed a broad, gentle grade across the Rocky Mountain Front Range. In addition, travelers along the route would find wood near Pine Bluffs and water and game along its length. In 1857, Lt. Bryan returned to Lodgepole Creek with a work crew and a cavalry escort to improve the route for wagon use by grading, improving crossing, and building bridges (Jackson 1952:127-130; Bastian 1987; Evans-Hatch 2004b).

Over the next two years the number of wagons and emigrants on the route increased. Between September 1858 and April 1859, the army established and operated Camp Walbach, on Lodgepole Creek east of Cheyenne Pass (about 20 miles east of Laramie, Wyoming), to protect emigrants traveling along the route. Consequently, parts of the route became known as the “Walbach Cutoff” and the “Cheyenne Pass Road” (Erb et al. 1989:36; see also Kimball 1988:153-158).

In 1862, Indian raids along Wyoming’s Sweetwater River prompted “Stagecoach King” Ben Holliday to move the Overland Stage and mail route from the primary Oregon and California Trail south to the Lodgepole Creek Trail corridor, and also to request and gain military protection of the route and his stations (Townley 1994:17-18). (Later, the Union Pacific Railroad, modern highways, and gas and oil pipelines also were built within the corridor.) More emigrants began taking the Lodgepole Creek Trail in order to avoid the conflict on the primary corridor of the Oregon and California trail, but the troubles soon met them here, as well. In 1866 the US Army established Fort Sanders in the Laramie Basin, at the southern outskirts of Laramie, Wyoming, to aid and protect emigrants (Frazer 1972:185). During the fort’s 16 years of existence (1866–1882), its troops participated in 20 major skirmishes with Indians. Fort Sanders’ ledgers in September 1868 recorded the passage of 1,352 emigrants, 789 wagons, and nearly 5,600 head of livestock on the Lodgepole Creek Trail (Headlee 1978). Travel past the fort declined in 1869 as the transcontinental railroad neared completion. Travelers bound for Idaho, Oregon, and Washington who could not afford train fare continued to use the trail many years after construction of the Union Pacific Railroad, and the trail saw some dwindling use well into the 20th century.

Through OCTA’s COED database and other sources of historical documentation, Fletcher and Fletcher identified 10 emigrant journals referencing travel over the Lodgepole Creek Route through 1869. Of these, three emigrants were traveling to California or the eastern slopes of the Sierra Nevada; two to Oregon or Washington; and four to other destinations (Utah, Montana, and central Nevada). The destination of one writer could not be determined from the materials submitted. However, since Fort Sanders’ ledgers reported over 1,350 emigrants in 1868 alone, the total emigration on the Lodgepole route from 1857 through 1869 could amount to over 10,000 persons.

The South Platte River Route of the COER runs about 197.5 miles from the South Platte River near Ovid to the Little Laramie River west of today’s Laramie, Wyoming. (Approximately half of that distance is coincident with one or both variants of the Cherokee Trail.) This connector probably began as an Indian trail and was later used by explorers and mountain men. Emigrant use of this South Platte segment is

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documented by a few diaries in 1854, but traffic on the route began to increase in 1859 and peaked in the 1860s. Through OCTA's COED database and other sources of historical documentation, Fletcher and Fletcher (in a summary form prepared for this study in 2011) listed 48 emigrant journals and diaries referencing travel via the South Platte River. Of those, 18 writers were bound for California and 20 were heading for other destinations. The destinations of the remaining 10 diarists could not be determined from the materials submitted for this study.

Including short variants used by emigrants, the proposed Simpson Route of the COER between Salt Lake City, Utah, and Reno, Nevada, is 910 miles long. It coincides with much of the existing Pony Express National Historic Trail from the Salt Lake Valley west across Utah and Nevada. The route was opened for military and mail purposes, but emigrants immediately adopted it.

In October 1858, Capt. James Simpson of the US Army Corps of Topographical Engineers conducted a short reconnaissance survey west from Camp Floyd, about 40 miles southwest of Salt Lake City. He reached the Dugway Mountains at the south end of the Great Salt Lake Desert, about 60 miles from today's Nevada border, before approaching winter forced his small detachment to turn back. Meanwhile, businessman George Chorpensing sought a route between Camp Floyd and Ruby Valley, in eastern Nevada, for his "Jackass Mail," a pack-mule operation with a federal contract to carry the US mail. Upon Simpson's return, he developed a pack trail along the survey route and extended it west to the Ruby Mountains. From there he turned his mules north to the Humboldt River and followed the California Trail west (Petersen 2008:2, 2012:18-19).

In May 1859, Simpson led a full expedition from Camp Floyd to open a direct and practical military wagon route between Utah and California. Simpson's wagon route largely incorporated Chorpensing's pack mule route (although there are differences between the two) and extended the road southwesterly from Ruby Valley to Genoa, where it connected with an existing serviceable wagon road. On the return journey to Camp Floyd, the survey party sometimes deviated from its outbound route, seeking to improve the alignment. Simpson reached Camp Floyd on Aug. 3 and four days later observed an emigrant wagon train heading out on the newly opened route. To encourage emigrant use, Simpson sent press releases to the Salt Lake City newspapers describing his route and reporting that it was about 300 miles shorter than the customary California Trail farther north along the Humboldt River. The new wagon road, he wrote, was "incomparably better in respect to wood, water and grass" and "will be found from 25 to 50 per cent better than the Old Humboldt River route" (J. H. Simpson, Aug. 7, 1859, as quoted in Petersen 2008:219). Emigrants embraced the invitation.

By November 1859, Chorpensing's Jackass Mail had adopted Simpson's extension from Ruby Valley to Carson City and established a string of mail and stage stations along the entire trail. However, the US Post Office annulled Chorpensing's contract on May 11, 1860, and the Pony Express usurped his stations and equipment for its own operation. Thus, the Pony Express Trail is coincident with much, but not all, of Simpson's Route. It was quickly adopted as an alternative to the Hastings Cutoff across the Great Salt Lake Desert.

By spring 1860, "emigrant traffic on [Simpson's] outbound trail had increased to the point that the army was ordered to begin providing these travelers some protection" from the rising Indian resistance (Petersen 2008:220), and army patrols began escorting emigrants west along the Simpson Route. Jesse Petersen, the primary historian of the Simpson Route, together with fellow researcher James O. Hall, has identified and published 23 journals written by emigrants who traveled variants of the Simpson and Pony Express routes between Salt Lake City and the Sierra Nevada (Petersen 2012).

As they approached California, emigrants on the COER followed routes of the existing California National Historic Trail into the Sierra Nevada to their various destinations.

**Conclusion:** In sum, the COER is not a single trail but a menu of routes and connectors, with different development histories, from which travelers selected ways west. As such, it takes in segments of established national historic trails, other current feasibility study routes, and other historic routes of travel, including stage and mail roads.

Table C-2 provides an accounting of emigrant use of individual COER routes and variants through 1869, as currently understood by the National Park Service. Researchers have identified 222 journal entries concerning these routes and variants, exclusive of the Cherokee Trail, which is analyzed separately in this study. That number does not represent 222 individual journals, however, as any single journal may have mentioned two or more of these COER routes. Further, the emigrant journal data provided by Fletcher and Fletcher is for all western destinations combined, not just for California. The National Park Service consulted Mattes (1988) to determine the specific destinations of the emigrant diarists cited by Fletcher and Fletcher. Where Mattes does not identify the writer's destination, or where the writer is not listed, his or her destination is counted as "undetermined." Petersen (2012) documents 85 journal mentions of the COER-Simpson study routes specifically across Utah and Nevada to California, and again, individual diaries often mentioned multiple routes or variants. For several of the major routes or variants included in the table, the National Park Service has been unable to identify any emigrant use data. Absence of data does not necessarily mean that the route or variant was not used, but only that known journals do not specifically identify it by name or by landmarks along the way.

**Table C-2. Documented Emigrant Use of COER Routes and Variants through 1869.**

COER Route, Section, or Variant	No. Journals for California/ Sierra Nevada Destinations	No. Journals for non-California Destinations	Destination Undetermined	No. Journals, All Destinations Combined
South Platte River Route (through 1849)	18 (Fletcher & Fletcher)	20 (Fletcher & Fletcher)	10 (Fletcher & Fletcher)	48 (Fletcher & Fletcher)
Box Elder Creek Route	No data	No data	No data	No data
Lodgepole Creek Route*	3 (Fletcher & Fletcher)	6 (Fletcher & Fletcher)	1 (Fletcher & Fletcher)	10 (Fletcher & Fletcher)
Little Laramie River to Little Sage Creek	No data	No data	No data	No data
Sweetwater Cutoff	3 (Fletcher & Fletcher)	4 (Fletcher & Fletcher)	6 (Fletcher & Fletcher)	13 (Fletcher & Fletcher)
Sage Creek Station- Granger	17 (Fletcher & Fletcher)	20 (Fletcher & Fletcher)	5 (Fletcher & Fletcher)	42 (Fletcher & Fletcher)
Salt Lake-Faust's via Camp Floyd	9 (Petersen)	0	0	9 (Petersen)
Salt Lake-Faust's via Tooele Valley	15 (Petersen)	0	0	15 (Petersen)
Simpson: Faust's-Fish Springs, Stage Route Variant**	5 (Petersen)	0	0	5 (Petersen)
Simpson: Faust's-Fish Springs, Indian Spring Variant	16 (Petersen)	0	0	16 (Petersen)
Simpson: Fish Springs- Ruby Valley, Pleasant Valley Variant	1 (Petersen)	0	0	1 (Petersen)
Simpson: Fish Springs- Ruby Valley, Overland Canyon Variant, Tippet Pass Branch	3 (Petersen)	0	0	3 (Petersen)

## Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes

COER Route, Section, or Variant	No. Journals for California/ Sierra Nevada Destinations	No. Journals for non-California Destinations	Destination Undetermined	No. Journals, All Destinations Combined
Simpson: Fish Springs-Ruby Valley, Overland Canyon Variant, Rock Springs Branch	8 (Petersen)	0	0	8 (Petersen)
Simpson: Fish Springs-Ruby Valley, Pony Express Variant	13 (Petersen)	0	0	13 (Petersen)
Simpson: Fish Springs-Ruby Valley, Overland Stage Variant	2 (Petersen)	0	0	2 (Petersen)
Simpson: Ruby Valley-Westgate, Eagle Butte Variant	14 (Petersen)	0	0	14 (Petersen)
Simpson: Ruby Valley-Westgate, Cape Horn Variant	2 (Petersen)	0	0	2 (Petersen)
Simpson: Ruby Valley-Westgate, New Austin Variant	2 (Petersen)	0	0	2 (Petersen)
Simpson: Ruby Valley-Westgate, Smith Creek/Pony Express Variant	3 (Petersen)	0	0	3 (Petersen)
Simpson: Ruby Valley-Westgate, New Pass/Stage Variant	2 (Petersen)	0	0	2 (Petersen)
Simpson: Westgate-Carson City, Carson Lake North Variant	7 (Petersen)	0	0	7 (Petersen)
Simpson: Westgate-Carson City, Bunejug Mountain Variant	2 (Petersen)	0	0	2 (Petersen)
Simpson: Westgate-Carson City, Carson Lake South Variant	5 (Petersen)	0	0	5 (Petersen)
Carson-Truckee Connector Rt.	No data	0	0	No data
Total Simpson Route Diaries (from Petersen 2012)	85 (Petersen)	0	0	85 (Petersen)

\*In addition, the Fort Sanders ledgers account for 1,342 emigrants (no data concerning destination) on this route in 1868 and 3,700 Utah-bound emigrants between 1864 and 1868.

Numbers for Simpson Route variants are from Petersen 2012 and from personal communications with the author received by the National Park Service in July 2012.

The greatest number of known references by emigrants bound for California via any single route or variant of the COER is 18, documented by Fletcher and Fletcher for the South Platte River Route. Employing Mattes' ratio of 250 emigrants per record provides an estimate of 4,500 California emigrants on that route alone. The Simpson Route with all of its variants (per Petersen 2012) claims 27 identified diarists, for an estimated emigration of 6,750 people.

Mileages for selected individual routes of the COER are shown in Table C-3.

**Table C-3. Mileages of Selected Routes of the COER**

COER Route, Section, or Variant	Miles Shared with Existing NHT	Miles Shared with another Study Route	New NHT Mileage	Total Route, Section, or Variant Miles
South Platte River Route (through 1849)	0	107	178	285
Lodgepole Creek Route	0	30	167.5	197.5
Little Laramie River to Little Sage Creek	0	65	65	130
Sweetwater Cutoff	0	21	50	71
Sage Creek Station-Granger	0	0	181	181
Simpson Route	592	0	318	910

There are many trail-related places of historical interest, including trail remnants, graves, and stage and Pony Express stations, along the COER. See appendix B for a representative listing.

Designation of the Central Overland Emigrant Routes could add up to 963 new miles to the California National Historic Trail and to the National Trails System if all routes are approved. Approximately 622.5 miles more are already designated routes of the California and Pony Express national historic trails. About 194.5 miles of the COER study route are shared with other feasibility study routes, and approximately 966.5 new miles are unique to the COER.

**35b. COER [Selected section, South Platte River Route].** This route description is included in the summary above. A placeholder has been added here so that study route numbers in Appendix A will correspond to study route numbers in the main body of this feasibility study.

**35c. COER [Selected section, Lodgepole Creek Trail].** This route description is included in the summary above. A placeholder has been added here so that study route numbers in Appendix A will correspond to study route numbers in the main body of this feasibility study.

**35d. COER [Selected sections through Wyoming: Little Laramie River to Sage Creek, Sweetwater Cutoff, and Sage Creek Station to Granger].** This route description is included in the summary above. A placeholder has been added here so that study route numbers in Appendix A will correspond to study route numbers in the main body of this feasibility study.

**35e. COER [Selected section, Simpson Route and Variants].** This route description is included in the summary above. A placeholder has been added here so that study route numbers in Appendix A will correspond to study route numbers in the main body of this feasibility study.

**36. Weber Canyon Route of the Hastings Cutoff.** This 92.5-mile route through narrow, rugged Weber Canyon, Utah, was opened by the first parties to attempt the Hastings Cutoff in 1846: the Bryant-Russell pack mule train and the Harlan-Young and Lienhard-Hoppe wagon parties, all traveling ahead of the Donner-Reed Party. The route begins at today's Echo, Utah, follows the Weber River Canyon northwest to Ogden Valley, and then runs south to the vicinity of Magna, Utah. Approximately 23 miles

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

coincide with the Salt Lake Cutoff of the California National Historic Trail. This route is under consideration for addition to the California National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** From the mouth of Echo Canyon, Utah, this route heads northwest down the Weber River Valley, passes the landmark of Witches Rocks, and goes through the town of Henefer to the mouth of Lost Creek. There the route turns west and enters the Weber River Canyon, passes Devil's Slide (a distinctive geological formation), and goes to Morgan, Utah. It continues another 14 miles through the Weber River Canyon to what was then a narrows known as Devil's Gate, where wagons had to enter the rushing river and follow the streambed for a distance. Two miles beyond Devil's Gate, the canyon opens into the Ogden Valley approximately two miles east of today's Hill Air Force Base. Here the route turns south between the eastern shore of the Great Salt Lake and the foot of the Wasatch Mountains. It runs through Layton, passes west of Kaysville, and arrives in the vicinity of what would later be known as Haight Creek.

From this point, the Harlan-Young and Hoppe-Lienhard wagon parties took slightly divergent routes. The Harlan-Young wagon party, in the lead, turned east to present-day Farmington and then veered south along the base of the Wasatch Mountains, passing through Centerville and Bountiful and continuing past Beck's Hot Springs and Warm Springs, on the north end of today's Salt Lake City. There they turned southwest, crossed the Jordan River near what is now North Temple Street in Salt Lake City, and continued on to intersect the route of the Hoppe-Lienhard party north of Magna.

The Hoppe-Lienhard wagon party, on the other hand, stayed closer to the Great Salt Lake, curving around today's Farmington Bay Waterfowl Management Area before turning southwest to cross the Jordan River at Hairpin Bend. They continued southwest, passing along the northwest side of today's Salt Lake International Airport, and merged with the route of the Harlan-Young party as described above. The combined route then continues west for two miles more before striking the designated Hastings Cutoff of the California National Historic Trail about halfway between Magna and Arthur, Utah. This is the western terminus of the Weber Canyon Route of the Hastings Cutoff study route.

**Historical Assets:** Devil's Slide is an unusual geological formation consisting of two vertical limestone strata separated by a narrow, eroded channel. It can be viewed from I-80. The canyon at Devil's Gate has been widened to accommodate the freeway and railroad corridor. The flow of the river itself is much reduced since the emigration period, as water today is withdrawn for agricultural purposes, but its canyon is still impressive. Beck's Hot Springs, once an emigrant camping and bathing area, today is a commercially operated recreational facility; Warm Springs has an interpretive area that is open to visitors.

**Historical Summary:** In 1846, several California-bound emigrant parties decided to attempt a new shortcut blazed by California promoter Lansford W. Hastings between Fort Bridger, Wyoming, and the Humboldt River in Nevada. The two lead wagon companies, the Harlan-Young Party of 70 to 80 wagons and the four-wagon Hoppe-Lienhard Party, cut a track from the fort into Utah and down Echo Canyon to the Weber River, in the Wasatch Mountains. From the mouth of Echo Canyon, Hastings' partner, James Hudspeth, led the Harlan-Young Party down the Weber Valley past the future town site of Henefer and into the Weber River Canyon. The Lienhard-Hoppe Party followed several days behind this group (Tea 2004).

The boulder-strewn, narrow defile and the rushing waters of the Weber River made wagon travel perilous. The Harlan-Young Party, with the aid of a windlass, hauled its wagons over several spur landforms projecting into the gorge where the canyon floor was too narrow for passage. One wagon and ox team plunged 75 feet to destruction when the windlass rope broke. Many years after his journey through the Weber Canyon, Samuel Young in 1878 recalled that the men of his party "spent four days clearing the boulders out of the way, and then they could make but one and a half miles per day" (as quoted in Kelly 1930:74). Heinrich Lienhard's 1846 journal recounts the hazards of the Devil's Gate



passage, where the party “went through the foaming river bed filled with large boulders, the wagon threatening to tip over, first on one side, then on the other” (Lienhard 1961:102).<sup>43</sup>

After emerging from the mouth of the Weber Canyon into Ogden Valley, the two wagon parties turned south and separately traveled slightly different routes around the south end of the Great Salt Lake. Between the Oquirrh Mountains and the south end of the lake near Magna, Utah, the routes of the Harlan-Young and Hoppe-Lienhard parties merged.

The Donner-Reed party, leaving Fort Bridger 11 days behind the lead companies, followed their trail down Echo Canyon and started into the Weber Valley. Near today’s community of Henefer they found a note from Hastings warning them not to follow the other wagons into Weber Canyon. They heeded Hastings’ advice and laboriously grubbed a new trail through the Wasatch Mountains to the Salt Lake Valley. The Donner-Reed party continued west across the valley and merged with the track of the Harlan-Young and Hoppe-Lienhard parties near Magna. The following summer, Mormon pioneers adopted the Donner-Reed route through the Wasatch into the Salt Lake Valley. Today that route, but not the Weber Canyon route, is part of the designated California, Mormon Pioneer, and Pony Express national historic trails.

In 1848, a year after Brigham Young and his followers had established Salt Lake City, members of the Mormon Battalion returning from California opened a new wagon route from the City of Rocks (on the established California Trail in southern Idaho) south to the Mormon capital. Once that trail was established, travelers coming from Fort Bridger could take Weber Canyon into Ogden Valley and then turn north on that route, called the Salt Lake Cutoff, to rejoin the California Trail at City of Rocks. By doing so they would bypass Salt Lake City, which lay approximately 40 miles south of Ogden Valley. However, the unimproved Weber Canyon route was still perilous, and the vast majority of emigrants preferred the Donner-Reed/Mormon pioneer trail into Salt Lake City, where they could trade livestock, buy provisions, seek legal and medical help, or lay over for the winter. The National Park Service has located no record of emigrant use of the Weber Canyon Route from 1847 through 1853.

But the California-bound Zumwalt and Foster families of Joliet, Illinois, faced a quandary as they approached the Wasatch Mountains from Fort Bridger in 1854. Apprehensive about the Mormons because of rumors they had heard along the trail, the party sought advice from a passing traveler. The “American” (non-Mormon) suggested they turn down Weber Canyon in order to bypass the Mormon capital. They did so successfully. The reminiscences of Nancy Zumwalt and Roxanna Foster do not mention any difficulties along the route, although it would have been quite rugged—and Mrs. Foster was nine months pregnant at the time. She gave birth to a son after emerging from the river canyon into Ogden Valley.<sup>44</sup>

A local toll road, authorized by the General Assembly of the State of Deseret in 1850, was opened through Weber Canyon in 1855 (Carter 1947; Morgan County Historical Society 2007). The Martin Heiner Family Organization (2013), whose mutual ancestor Sara Elizabeth Henderson traveled up Weber Canyon to Morgan Valley in 1860, provides a description of the initial road construction and its condition the year she saw it. The family’s website reports,

The very crude road had been built just five years earlier in 1855 by Thomas J. Thurston, Charles S. Peterson, his two sons and others, and Jedadiah Morgan Grant sent three men with teams to assist in putting the road through the canyon. It was a very great

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<sup>43</sup> Lienhard’s account of his American adventure is widely translated from its original German and is well known to trail buffs. Edwin Bryant published a popular account of his trip to California, including the Weber River experience, called *What I Saw in California*.

<sup>44</sup> Excerpts of the reminiscences of Nancy Zumwalt Hunt and Roxanna Foster were provided to the National Park Service by a descendant, Alan R. Weaver (personal communication, 5/31/2013). Summaries of the reminiscences also are included in Mattes (1988), but that author does not specify that the party took the Weber Canyon route.

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

undertaking with their primitive ways of building roads. Their tools consisted of picks, shovels, and crowbars, with small plows. In some narrow places they had to go up on the side of the canyon and loosen large rocks and boulders and then roll them down into the river below to form a foundation on which to build a road. At last they were successful in completing this very crude, passable road, even so, the road through Weber Canyon was so narrow and hazardous that most people traveling through it left their wagons and buggies and walked the narrow stretch which was commonly known as Horseshoe Bend. The driver would then lead the horses and wagons around the bend. This road was still hazardous in 1915.

J. W. Dunn's 1857 company of 18 men and boys drove 600 head of cattle through Weber Canyon to save miles on their way to California. Even though the road had opened two years prior, Dunn described it as "exceedingly roughf [sic] & Rocky" and "the worst Route that Man & Stock was ever doomed to travel." The party had to pay an interpreter, a Delaware Indian man named Ben Simons, \$30 to conduct them past an intimidating gathering of several hundred local Indians, probably Utes, in the canyon. After five days on the narrow track—crossing the Weber River two or three times each mile and at times struggling to find their cattle as well as the road among the willow thickets—Dunn's company emerged onto the Salt Lake Cutoff in Ogden Valley. In his trail diary Dunn concluded, "we saved ½ distance by coming that way but paid dear for the Whistle and had it to whistle at our own Expense after all 70 miles by [Salt Lake City] 35 through [Weber Canyon]." <sup>45</sup>

William Audley Maxwell (1915), remembering the experiences of his wagon party of 37 California-bound emigrants who also passed through in 1857, alludes to a route that "led to the north of Great Salt Lake, thence northwesterly...[which] did not therefore bring us within view of the Mormon settlements which had already been established at the southerly end of the great inland sea." Maxwell's writings do not provide details of trail, but the Weber Canyon-Salt Lake Cutoff route generally fits his description.

The 1861 party of James Norvell, on the way to California via the Weber Canyon-Salt Lake Cutoff route, shared Dunn's opinion of the road. Norvell, who was about 13 at the time, later recalled, "The scenery in Weber Canyon was beautiful and grand, but the road was about as bad as a road could well be imagined." Norvell (1961:13) wrote,

We came to one place in Weber Canyon, where the walls closed in, and the road left the stream, ran up and over a mountain, which was so steep going up, that we had to double our teams; take half of the wagons to the top, and go back and get the others. We found the road leading down on the other side steeper; so much so, that we had to unhitch the teams from the wagons, and lower them by hand, using ropes to assist in the effort. This we had to do in the midst of a thunderstorm, with wind, rain, and hail as accompaniment.

Norvell also reported that a train ahead of his was attacked in the canyon during the night—"whether they were all Indians or all Mormons, or part of each, they never knew." The victims, some wounded, were "stripped of everything of value, and their stock gone," Norvell (1961:13) reported. His party took them in.

Workers were still making improvements to the Weber Canyon wagon road more than a decade after it opened: a July 1866 letter from LDS Church President Brigham Young to the "Directors of the Weber Kanyon Roads" authorized collection of "two thousand (2,000) Dollars in stock, vegetables and grain to go towards completing the road, now underway, out the north side of the Weber river." By 1869 laborers had laid a track for the Union Pacific Railroad through the defile, tunneling through the projecting spurs and bridging Devil's Gate. Today I-84 runs through the canyon, as well.

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<sup>45</sup> LDS Church historians Michael Landon and Mel Bashore provided a summary and excerpts of Dunn's 12 April–26 Nov. 1857 diary, which is archived at the Center for American History, University of Texas, Austin.

**Conclusion:** Weber Canyon was the original route of the 1846 Hastings Cutoff into the Salt Lake Valley. However, it was so difficult and dangerous that Hastings advised the Donner-Reed Party to avoid the canyon and cut a new trail through the mountains, which caused them extended delay. In that way, the Weber Canyon Route indirectly led to the troubles of the Donner-Reed Party, who later were caught in an early snowstorm in the Sierra Nevada. Otherwise, this route carried a small volume of overland emigration traffic, amounting to approximately 260 emigrants of record. Trail-related places of historical interest include several trailside landmarks and an interpretive area.

Designation of the 92.5-mile Weber Canyon Route would add 69.5 miles to the California National Historic Trail and to the National Trails System. Another 23 miles of the route are already designated as part of the California NHT.

**37. 1850 Golden Pass Road.** This 58.5-mile toll road branches off the Hastings Cutoff of the California Trail at the mouth of Echo Canyon in Utah, runs south up the Weber River, and ends in Salt Lake City. The route is under consideration for addition to the Mormon Pioneer, Pony Express, and California national historic trails.

**Route Description:** The Golden Pass Road branches off the Hastings Cutoff of the California Trail at the mouth of Echo Canyon and turns south up the Weber River (instead of going down the river, like the main trail for a distance, and the Weber Canyon Route). The road runs beneath today's Echo Reservoir for about four miles to Coalville, Utah. The original route (1850–1864), which was used by the Pony Express for about six weeks in April and May 1860, crosses the Weber River south of Coalville and continues south along the west bank of the stream to the town of Wanship. After 1865, the wagon route remained on the east side of the Weber River south of Coalville. It crosses the river south of Hoytsville, joins the original route, and continues south to Wanship. Here the route splits.

- a. **Threemile Canyon Route.** The original 1850 route of the Golden Pass Road continues up the Weber River for four miles to today's Rockport Lake, which submerges about two miles of the old road. At Threemile Canyon, at the south end of Rockport Lake, the route turns southwest and enters Parley's Park east of Silver Creek Junction, on I-80. This route was used until 1861, when the Silver Creek Canyon Road was opened.
- b. **Silver Creek Canyon.** Silver Creek Canyon was impassable to wagons when the Golden Pass Road was originally built. In 1860, the Utah Territorial Legislature appropriated funding to develop a roadway through Silver Creek Canyon (Eldredge 2012:1). The new road, built for hauling coal from Chalk Creek to Salt Lake City (Eldredge 2012:1; G. Williams, personal communication, 4/22/2013), allowed traffic to bypass the difficult climb over Big Mountain. The road was opened in the summer of 1861, and by 1862 all emigrant wagons followed this route (R. Andersen, personal communication, 6/19/2012). From Wanship the route goes southwesterly up Silver Creek Canyon and emerges at Parleys Park, where it connects with the Threemile Canyon Route.

From Parleys Park, the Golden Pass Road followed Kimball Creek for about four miles to Parleys Canyon. It then followed the canyon west to today's Mountain Dell Reservoir and continued on to Salt Lake City. In the city, the route follows the north bank of Parleys Creek to join the Hastings Cutoff in today's Sugarhouse district of Salt Lake City. Most emigrants continued into Salt Lake City to resupply.

**Historical Assets:** The privately owned Kimball Ranch, an original Overland Stage station and inn from 1862 to 1868, can be viewed from I-80. One to two miles of trail still exists in Threemile Canyon. Construction of the interstate highway has obliterated the original Golden Pass Road along most of its length, but associated ruins are interpreted at Parley's Nature Park, at the mouth of Parley's Canyon in Salt Lake City.

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

**Historical Summary:** The original wagon route through the Wasatch Mountains, established by the 1846 Donner Party and improved the following year by Mormon pioneers, was steep and perilous, requiring passage over two mountains and down a series of narrow, twisting canyons with multiple stream crossings. It entered the Valley of the Great Salt Lake via Emigration Canyon. In 1849–1850, Mormon pioneer Parley P. Pratt developed a new toll road that bypassed the problem areas and entered Salt Lake City via Parleys Canyon a short distance south of the mouth of Emigration Canyon. He opened his Golden Pass Road (so-called because of the golden-colored rock outcroppings at Parleys Canyon) on July 4, 1850, and charged travelers an average toll of \$1 per wagon (Korns and Morgan 1994:251–260).

At least two Mormon companies, comprising about 60 wagons and 260 people, were among those who followed the Golden Pass Road in 1850. Thereafter, however, the road largely fell into disuse: emigrants chose the original, free, shorter (by nine miles), and lower-elevation Emigration Canyon route to the valley instead of Pratt's new toll road. In April 1851, Pratt sold his interest in the Golden Pass Road. Over the next 10 years, some portions of the road experienced occasional traffic, including short-term use by the Pony Express and about 1,850 Mormon emigrants. The portion of the route from Parley's Park to Coalville saw continued use in 1857–1858 by 10 to 15 wagons per day carrying supplies for the Army at Camp Floyd (G. Williams, personal communication, 4/22/2013). Then in 1862 a new section of road was constructed from the Golden Pass Road through Silver Creek Canyon (Korns and Morgan 1994; Eldredge and Eldredge 2009; Eldredge 2012). The Mormon emigration began traveling the improved Golden Pass/Silver Creek route into Salt Lake Valley, with approximately 20,500 Mormon emigrants using the road between 1862 and 1868 (Andersen 2009j). Today, I-80 follows the route of the Golden Pass Road.

In addition to Mormon traffic, the Golden Pass Road was used by the Pony Express for approximately six weeks, between April 3 and May 16, 1860, because the regular trail over Little and Big Mountains was blocked by snow. (Even today the paved highway over Big Mountain is closed until the end of May each year due to snow.) Riders made a total of 10 trips, both westbound and eastbound, along this route that early spring. After the passes opened, the Pony Express resumed its regular route through the Wasatch Mountains (Nardone 2012).

**Conclusion:** In sum, the Golden Pass Road was used by all Mormon emigrant companies from 1862 through 1868. A total of about 20,760 Mormon emigrants and an unknown number of California-bound emigrants followed the Golden Pass Road into Salt Lake City. California emigration on the route would have been fairly light, as Salt Lake City was a diversion from the more direct California Trail through Idaho (and by these years, almost no one was attempting the Hastings Cutoff from Salt Lake City across the Great Salt Lake Desert); however, some California-bound emigrants did make the trip into Salt Lake City to resupply, and some of those probably used the route. Trail-related places of historical interest include the privately owned Kimball Ranch and trail-associated remnants, interpreted by wayside exhibits, at Parley's Nature Park in Salt Lake City.

Designation of the Golden Pass Road would add 58.5 new miles each to the Mormon Pioneer, California, and Pony Express national historic trails and to the National Trails System.

**38. McAuley Cutoff.** This 7.5-mile route begins about five miles west of the Idaho/Wyoming state line, just after the crossing of Sheep Creek. It dips around Big Hill at the south end of the Sheep Creek Hills and rejoins the main trail on the western side. It is under consideration for addition to the California and Oregon national historic trails.

**Route Description:** This Idaho variant leaves the main Oregon and California trail after crossing Sheep Creek and follows along the north bank of Bear River, approximating the route of US 30. It rejoins the main trail two and a half miles west of Big Hill. The "cutoff" avoids a climb and descent but was somewhat longer than the main trail.

**Historical Assets:** US 30 overlies the route, and the valley has been developed for agricultural purposes. The descent of Big Hill, which the cutoff was intended to avoid, is visible from the highway.

The cutoff is interpreted at a highway pullout by an Idaho State Historical Society sign and an OCTA marker.

**Historical Summary:** Big Hill, about eight miles southeast of Montpelier, Idaho, was identified in some travelers' journals as a difficult descent, but others did not mention it at all. On July 16, 1852, emigrant diarist Eliza Ann McAuley wrote, "[T]he boys took another look at the pass and concluded to stop and make a road around the mountain" (Hutchinson and Jones 1993:15). The McAuley Party, which itself had crossed over Big Hill, stopped and spent 12 days building an alternate road around the obstacle. Most of the party then continued their journey, leaving two members behind for "a week or two to collect toll and pay the expenses of making it" (McAuley 1991:64–65). Some emigrants took the alternate, but "after that year it appears high water had destroyed the road and discouraged any further attempts to use this variant" (Hutchinson and Jones 1993:15). A query of OCTA's COED database on the term "McAuley" and a search of location listings for "McAker" through "McCune," to identify variant spellings, identified no mentions of this route.

**Conclusion:** In sum, the McAuley Cutoff was built in 1852 to avoid a hill descent. It was used over one season by probably fewer than 100 emigrants. No original remnants exist, but the alternate is interpreted at a roadside pullout.

Designation of this route would add 7.5 miles each to the Oregon and California national historic trails and to the National Trails System.

**39. Bidwell-Bartleson Route (Soda Springs to Marsh's Rancho, California).** This 1841 route of the first overland emigrant party to California departs from the main Oregon Trail at Sheep Rock, six miles west of Soda Springs, Idaho. It winds through Utah north of the Great Salt Lake, follows the Humboldt River across Nevada, and crosses the Sierra Nevada to Marsh's Rancho on Marsh Creek, three miles southwest of Brentwood, California. Most of the Bidwell-Bartleson route across Nevada, as well as shorter segments in Utah and California, coincide with the designated California National Historic Trail. The 994.5-mile feasibility study route is under consideration for addition to the California National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** Sheep Rock, near Soda Springs, Idaho, is a geological promontory where the north-flowing Bear River makes a U-turn around the end of the Wasatch Range and heads south to the Great Salt Lake. At that landmark, fur trade parties and early Oregon-bound missionaries turned northwest up the Portneuf Valley and continued toward Fort Hall. However, the Bidwell-Bartleson Party, seeking a route to California, drove around Sheep Rock to follow the Bear River south. These emigrants, traveling without a knowledgeable guide or useful maps of the west, planned to work their way south and west to Mary's River (now the Humboldt River) in Nevada and cross the Sierra Nevada to California.

They followed the Bear to the hot springs at Oneida Narrows, where the river runs between the Portneuf and Bear River ranges. There the Bidwell-Bartleson Party left the Bear River and went southwest to Battle Creek. Their route crosses US 91 at Battle Creek and winds around landforms and drainages toward present-day Weston, Idaho.

The Bidwell-Bartleson route enters Utah two miles south of Weston, where it rejoins the Bear River. The party proceeded along the west side of the stream through Trenton and Amalga, Utah, to Horseshoe Bend. There the route makes a big U-turn back to the north, still following the river. The route goes along the north bank of Cutler Reservoir and continues downstream, west and south, to a point two miles east of Fielding, Utah. At that point the Bidwell-Bartleson Party left the Bear River once again and headed west across today's town of Fielding. Upon encountering the Malad River, the party turned north to seek a ford, finally crossing at Rocky Ford west of today's Plymouth, Utah.

Once across the Malad, the route turns south through the Bear River Valley, passes through Uddy Hot Springs, and follows the west bank of the Malad River through Tremonton toward the northeast end of

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

the Great Salt Lake. Being confused and not knowing what to do, the Bidwell-Bartleson Party turned northeast again toward the Bear River, which they struck at today's town of Corinne, Utah, 65 miles north of Salt Lake City. Then they turned around and headed northwest, passing south of Little Mountain. In the course of traveling this triangular route, the party's wagons often became stuck in lakeside muck, and in places the sagebrush was so heavy that it overturned the lighter wagons.

Now the party worked its way around the mud flats at the north end of the Great Salt Lake. There are no contemporaneous maps of the route, but journals show that the party moved westward day by day to Connor Springs, Cedar Spring, and Salt Wells, crossing part of present-day Golden Spike National Historic Site along the way. Today Connor and Salt springs are part of large ranch developments and Cedar Spring has been improved for livestock. From Salt Wells they turned southwest again and reached the Great Salt Lake at Monument Point.

From there the party turned northwest to Tenmile Spring, where they camped for nine days while their scouts attempted to locate Mary's River. Upon resuming their travels, the emigrants went on to Baker and Rosebud springs and continued south and west. Their route reaches US 30 south of the Bovine Mountains and parallels the highway to Owl Spring, where the emigrants abandoned two of their wagons. Now the trail turns south along the east side of the Pilot Range and continues through Lucin, Utah, still following a series of springs. Beyond Lucin lies a stretch of wagon ruts that researcher Roy Tea believes may have been pioneered by the Bidwell-Bartleson Party (Tea 2012).<sup>46</sup>

At a private ranch 24 miles south of Lucin is a large spring that later was named for the Donner Party, who stopped there in 1846. The private landowners have made Donner Spring available for interpretation and public visitation. From there, the Bidwell-Bartleson route coincides for the next 33.5 miles with the Hastings Cutoff, part of the designated California National Historic Trail.

The party traveled southwest between Pilot Peak and the Silver Island Mountains into today's state of Nevada, reaching Halls Springs on Sept. 14, 1841. They next crossed over Bidwell Pass and turned west. Their route crossed Pilot Peak Valley and went over the Toanto Range at Silver Zone Pass to reach Big Springs in Goshute Valley. Here they abandoned their remaining wagons to proceed as a pack party, with many of their members now afoot.<sup>47</sup> At this place the Bidwell-Bartleson route temporarily leaves the designated Hasting Cutoff, which turned south at Big Springs.

The party headed southwest across the Pequop Mountains at Little Lake Pass, crossed Independence Valley past the north edge of Spruce Mountain Ridge, and passed south of Snow Water Lake. At Clover Valley the Hastings Cutoff rejoins the Bidwell-Bartleson route. They went southwest across Ruby Valley to Sulphur Hot Springs at the base of the Ruby Mountains, and then turned south, looking for a pass. Striking Harrison Pass Creek, they ascended and crossed the Ruby Mountains at Harrison Pass.

Next they swung northwesterly along a series of creek drainages to Huntington Creek, which the party followed north to strike the South Fork of the Humboldt River. Their route followed the river north through South Fork Canyon to its confluence with the Humboldt River near Moleen, Nevada, about 10 miles southwest of Elko.

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<sup>46</sup> Trail researcher Roy Tea spent many years studying the Bidwell-Bartleson journals, which provide mileages and descriptions, and retracing the party's route as it went from spring to spring between the Bear and Humboldt rivers.

<sup>47</sup> Bidwell-Bartleson researcher David Johnson writes that "there is little specific knowledge of the precise route of the Bidwell-Bartleson Party through much of Nevada after they reach the Elko area [at the confluence of the South Fork Humboldt and the Humboldt River]. For the most part, all we know is that they went down the Humboldt River, swung across through the Carson Sink and intercepted the Walker River. The [Bidwell-Bartleson] route could be exactly on the California Trail or could have deviated slightly. To shift the trail one way or the other is mostly interpolated based on the topography. Only when the route reaches the Walker River is it possible to be more specific about the route, partly because of clues in the accounts and partly because of the more restrictive geography" (D. Johnson, correspondence to Jere Krakow, 3/15/2011).

The South Fork of the Humboldt and the Humboldt River corridor (described below) are part of the Hastings Cutoff of the designated California National Historic Trail.

The party crossed the Humboldt River and traveled along its north bank through Carlin Canyon, staying on the river through Palisade Canyon. (Unlike subsequent wagon parties, the Bidwell-Bartleson pack train could traverse the narrow Palisade Canyon. Wagon traffic later developed a different route through the Tuscarora Mountains). At Gravelly Ford, which would become a major emigrant crossing on the Humboldt River, they kept to the north side. They next crossed Boulder Valley and passed Stony Point, a narrow constriction at the toe of the Sheep Creek Range.

The Bidwell-Bartleson Party continued along the Humboldt River, went through Emigrant Canyon at the south end of the Osgood Mountains, and passed the future town site of Winnemucca, which is on the south side of the river. Their route continued along the north bank through Lassen's Meadows at the river's Big Bend, where Rye Patch Reservoir now submerges part of the emigrant trail. They followed the river as it curved to the south, passing through present-day Lovelock, Nevada, and continued west of the Humboldt Sink. They went south, paralleling today's alignment of US 95 over the western edge of the Stillwater Wildlife Management Area, through Fallon, Nevada, across the Lahontan Valley, and continued west of Carson Lake. (The Bidwell-Bartleson Route leaves the designated California NHT east of the Hot Springs Mountains and north of Fallon.) Still on today's highway alignment, the route goes through Russell Pass between the Desert and the White Throne mountains ranges and continues west across mountainous country and Long Valley. At the northern end of the Calico Hills, the route leaves US 95 and heads west to cross the Walker River a mile south of today's Weber Dam. The route contours around the north end of the Wassuk Mountains and crosses Mason Valley, now intersecting the alignment of US 95A and crossing the Walker River again at McLede Hill. Here the Bidwell-Bartleson trail approximates the Walker River-Sonora Route, which is part of the designated California National Historic Trail.

The Bidwell-Bartleson route turns south along the river past the Singatse Range and follows the West Walker River through Wilson Canyon. From here the river and the trail go generally southwesterly across Smith Valley to Wellington, Nevada. The party passed through Hoye Canyon between the Pine Nut Mountains and the Wellington Hills, still on the West Walker River, and turned south across Antelope Valley to enter California. Just past Centennial Bluff, the route leaves the West Walker River and crosses US 395. Here the Bidwell-Bartleson route leaves the designated corridor of the California National Historic Trail; the party's route ahead through the Sierra was never used again by the oncoming emigration.

A mile and a half west of the highway crossing the route enters the Toiyabe National Forest and heads west across an unnamed pass at the Mono and Alpine county line. The route descends Snodgrass and Silver creeks around Mineral Mountain to the East Fork of the Carson River. It turns south and follows the river upstream to Golden Canyon. From here the Bidwell-Bartleson Party headed up Golden Canyon and entered today's Stanislaus National Forest. The party went around Disaster Peak and descended to Disaster Creek, continued down the creek to the south, and reached Clarks Fork of the Stanislaus River. Next they followed Clarks Fork downstream to the Middle Fork of the Stanislaus River, which they reached about three and a half miles northwest of Donnell Lake. The Bidwell-Bartleson Party stayed on the canyon rim above the river while moving southwesterly, and then descended and crossed the river at the south end of modern-day Beardsley Lake.

The route crosses a divide between the Middle and South forks of the Stanislaus River, crosses the South Fork, and climbs to a divide between the North Fork Tuolumne and the South Fork of the Stanislaus rivers. It continues through Sugar Pine, California, and parallels CA-108 southwest to Monte Vista, where the route temporarily leaves the highway and turns west to Sonora. At Sugar Pine, the Bidwell-Bartleson Route crosses the Walker River-Sonora Route of the designated California National Historic Trail, and the two routes are roughly parallel (with the Bidwell-Bartleson route following a ridge and the Walker River-Sonora Route following Sullivan Creek) for 10 miles into Sonora, where the Walker River-Sonora Route ends.

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The Bidwell-Bartleson pack route continues through Jamestown, California, rejoins CA-108, and goes southwest to Yosemite Junction. It parallels the highway alignment to cross Creek Spring Run, turns west (still on the highway), and reaches the Stanislaus River near the Tuolumne/Stanislaus county line. From there the route runs west along the south bank of the river to Oakdale.

Still following the Stanislaus River, the party passed north of present-day Modesto to cross the San Joaquin River. The emigrants turned north along the San Joaquin's west bank, crossed the alignment of I-5, and crossed the Old River one mile southwest of present Mossdale. They continued northwest across Union Island, re-crossed Old River, and arrived, after a seven-month journey, at Dr. John Marsh's Rancho los Meganos at the foot of Mount Diablo.

The Bidwell-Bartleson Route across Idaho, Utah, and most of Nevada is securely known from landmarks mentioned in the writings of party members, although no original, intact trail remnants have been verifiably attributed to this group. The route through the Sierra Nevada, however, is interpolated based on constraining topography and clues offered in the travel accounts.

**Historical Assets:** Sheep Rock, Idaho, visible from US 30, is a prominent landmark where the Bear River turns south around the north end of the Wasatch Range and drains toward the Great Salt Lake. The spot is interpreted at a riverside overlook there. The hot springs at the Oneida Narrows, the party's August 13, 1841, campsite in Utah, are mentioned in James Johns' journal (John 1991) and are visible from US 34. Rocky Ford on the Malad River had been used for years by American Indians and trappers before the Bidwell-Bartleson party crossed at that location. It exists on private property. Uddy Hot Springs, a series of springs along a creek, was developed into a resort called Belemont Springs, today called Camper World Hot Springs. Several other springs along the route across Utah's West Desert still exist, including Rosebud Spring and Owl Spring, but many are part of modern developments and are not accessible to the public. Trail researcher Roy Tea suggests that some wagon road remnants that are off the main California Trail, particularly in the vicinity of Owl Spring, may have been pioneered by the Bidwell-Bartleson Party.

Donner Spring is on private property, where the site is interpreted and the landowners currently permit public visitation. Halls Spring, beyond Donner Spring, is on public land in Utah. Pilot Peak, a 10,700-foot Nevada mountain named by John C. Fremont, was a landmark to all emigrant parties moving west through this part of the country. It is visible over long distances from public roads and highways. Bidwell Pass was pioneered by the Bidwell-Bartleson Party, and the later Hastings Cutoff when through there, as well. The site is interpreted. A segment of trail remnants lies about a mile from the pass. The spring at Silver Zone Pass still exists but is on private land. Big Springs, in Goshute Valley where the party abandoned the last of its wagons, is extant on private property.

Sulphur Hot Springs also are on private property. The nearby Ruby Mountains and surrounding vista are little changed since the Bidwell-Bartleson Party passed through. A public overlook of the South Fork Humboldt River provides an impressive view of the canyon, which was often mentioned by later emigrants traveling the Hastings Cutoff. Visitors also can hike the old wagon route through the gorge. A local road takes motorists through scenic Carlin Canyon, where interpreted trail remnants can be found. Gravelly Ford and related wagon trace are on private land. The Humboldt Sink, where the Humboldt River ends, spread its waters to create a vast marsh and in wet years formed Humboldt Lake. It is visible from I-80. Humboldt Bar, also visible from I-80, is a natural dam that separates the Humboldt and Carson sinks. Parts of the Forty-mile Desert retain the 19th century character of the area, although trail remnants there date to a later period.

The adjacent landscape is little changed across much of the route, especially the vicinities of Golden Spike National Historic Site and the Pilot Range, through Harrison Pass in the Ruby Mountains, in the Lassen Meadows area, and through the wilderness of the Sierra Nevada. No visible remnants of the original Bidwell-Bartleson trail are known to exist in these areas. John Marsh's Rancho is a 3,659-acre California state park with natural habitat, wildlife, and Marsh's historic home.



**Historical Summary:** The 1841 Bidwell-Bartleson Route is of exceptional historical significance as the first overland emigrant route to California. The party's route across Nevada along the Humboldt River, in particular, became an important component of the California Trail, followed by tens of thousands of people.

The first overland emigrants to California gathered in Westport, Missouri, in 1841, ready to start west with no reliable map of the west, no guide, and no experience living in the wilderness or interacting with American Indians. Thomas Fitzpatrick consented to guide the group, which called itself the Western Emigration Society, as far west as Sheep Rock, near Soda Springs, Idaho. There he left them: Fitzpatrick was not going on to California. The mountain man warned the emigrants against attempting to cross the little-known Great Basin, and about half of the company heeded his advice and decided to follow the old Hudson's Bay Company trappers' trail to Oregon, instead. The other half, however, decided to stick to their original plan and strike out on their own to reach California. This group, known as the Bidwell-Bartleson party, consisted of 32 men, one woman, and a six-month-old child. Trappers from Fort Hall told them of a river somewhere to the west that would lead them across the desert to the Sierra Nevada. They set out to find it.

The Bidwell-Bartleson Party followed the Bear River south to the Great Salt Lake and then turned west. Lured by mirages that appeared to be groves of trees indicating the presence of freshwater springs, they wrestled their wagons through heavy mud and sagebrush at the north end of the lake, but finally gave up the struggle and returned to the river. On their second attempt, the party steered northwest (crossing their earlier path) to avoid the mudflats, and followed a series of springs around the north end of the Great Salt Lake. Near today's Utah/Nevada border, one family of the party abandoned its wagons and continued on foot. At Big Spring in Nevada, the other members gave up their remaining wagons and packed their belongings on the backs of their oxen. They would cross Nevada as a pack party with some members afoot and others on horseback, but all without wagons to haul their supplies and equipment.

A short distance beyond Donner Spring, at the west of the Great Salt Lake Desert, the party crossed a ridge that was eventually named Bidwell Pass. At that pass five years later, Edwin Bryant, a member of the 1846 Hastings Cutoff pack train, wrote:

[W]e struck a wagon-trail, which evidently had been made several years. From the indentations of the wheels, where the earth was soft, five or six wagons had passed here...I soon recollected that some five or six years ago an emigrating expedition to California was fitted out by Colonel Bartlettson [Bartleson], Mr. J. Chiles, and others, of Missouri....and that they were finally compelled to abandon their wagons and everything they had, and did not reach their destination until they had suffered incredible hardships and privations. This, it appeared to me, was evidently their trail; and old as it was, and scarcely perceivable, 'twas nevertheless some gratification to us that civilized human beings had passed here before, and left their mark upon the barren earth behind them (Bryant 1967:185).

The Bidwell-Bartleson Party continued working south and west around topographic obstacles until reaching the foot of Nevada's Ruby Mountains. Fearing they had gone too far south in search of their river, the party packed over Harrison Pass and turned north along a series of drainages that led them at last to Mary's River, now known as the Humboldt. From the vicinity of today's town of Elko, they followed the north side of the Humboldt to its end beyond today's Lovelock, Nevada. They continued across the Fortymile Desert, led by Indian guides, to the Carson River. In the vicinity of Wellington, Nevada, their guides left them, and the party followed a network of canyons into and eventually through the Sierra Nevada to their destination, Dr. John Marsh's Rancho Los Meganos in modern-day Contra Costa County, California.

The Bidwell-Bartleson Party was the first emigrant company to go overland to reach California. Theirs was the first emigrant party to follow the Humboldt River, which after 1848 was the principal route of the California Trail through Nevada. Among the party was a young woman, 18-year-old Nancy Kelsey,

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who carried her toddler on her hip while hiking, half-starved and pregnant, across Nevada. She was the first white woman to cross the Sierra Nevada, and she did it on foot and with a child, proving beyond doubt that women and children could make the trip. Her husband, Ben, was later among several members of the party to join the Bear Flag Rebellion, which ultimately established the California Republic. John Bidwell became quite prominent in the development of California. He founded the town of Chico, discovered gold at Feather River, and served as a brigadier general in the state militia, as a state senator, and as a US congressman. He also ran unsuccessfully for election as governor of California and president of the United States. His writings about his trip west were published and served as an early guide for other emigrants (Tea 2012). Another member of the party, Joseph Chiles, returned east to work as a trail guide and he led seven more wagon trains to California. He helped open new segments of the California Trail, which brought hundreds of thousands of Argonauts to the goldfields. Much of the party's original route between Donner Springs and the Humboldt River became part of the 1846 Hastings Cutoff; their route along the Humboldt River became the California Trail; and other parts of their route beyond the river became variants of the California Trail. All told, the Bidwell-Bartleson party figures prominently in the history of California and the United States.

**Conclusion:** In sum, only 34 emigrants traveled the entire route from Westport, Missouri, to California in 1841, but the accomplishment of the Bidwell-Bartleson Party was momentous. Theirs was the first successful overland emigrant route to California, and most of it became the established California Trail that led hundreds of thousands of later emigrants and gold-seekers to the West Coast. Its members proved that emigrants could reach the west by going overland, and they proved that women and children could make the trip. Although no known physical evidence of the passage of this small party remains, much of the landscape through which they traveled is little changed and numerous landmarks and springs where they camped are still extant. There are numerous trail-related places of historic and recreational interest along their route of travel. Many miles of the route are accessible to hikers, equestrians, and other recreationists.

Designation of this 994.5-mile route would add 659.5 new miles to the California National Historic Trail and to the National Trails System. The other 335 miles overlap with already designated California National Historic Trail.

**40. Bishop Creek Cutoff (Bishop Creek Route).** This 20.5-mile route segment was the original wagon trail from Thousand Springs Valley, Nevada, to the Humboldt River in northeastern Nevada. It bypasses the Humboldt Wells emigrant campground, which was developed two years after the opening of the Bishop Creek trail. Bishop Creek Cutoff is under study for the California and Oregon national historic trails.

The Bishop Creek Cutoff in fact is not a cutoff but the original route of the California Trail. The route to Humboldt Wells, which is now part of the designated national historic trail, was a later diversion. If this segment is designated as part of the California National Historic Trail, its name should reflect that it was part of the primary route and is not a cutoff. Hereafter in this document it is called the Bishop Creek Route.

**Route Description:** The Bishop Creek Route leaves the designated California National Historic Trail at Willow Creek, west of the Windermere Hills and about 14 miles northeast of Wells, Nevada. The trail crosses US 93 and follows Bishop Creek west. The route then runs along the floor of a modern reservoir, which in recent years has been dry, for about three and a half miles to Bishop Canyon. It passes the Bishop Canyon Hot Springs (also called Twelve Mile Spring), where emigrants liked to stop and enjoy the warm water, and continues down the creek for about 11.5 miles to the Humboldt River. There it rejoins the designated California National Historic Trail.

**Historical Assets:** The damming of Bishop Creek in modern times has flooded a three-mile section of the canyon near the east end of the route. However, a three-mile segment of trail that extends from its

split with the Humboldt-Wells route to the eastern end of Bishop Creek reservoir has retained intermittent, original trail ruts and intact setting, and Twelve Mile Spring still bubbles about two miles southwest of the reservoir. Another mile-long segment of original trail lies at the western end of the route. Some of the trail crosses private land that may be fenced to prevent access.

**Historical Summary:** In 1843, mountain man Joseph Walker led a California-bound wagon party through the City of Rocks in today's Idaho, across Thousand Springs Valley, Nevada, and down Bishop Creek to the Humboldt River. This was the earliest emigrant route connecting Thousand Springs Valley with the Humboldt River. An 1845 variant, now part of the currently designated California National Historic Trail, later diverted traffic from Thousand Springs Valley to Humboldt Wells (today, Wells, Nevada) and thence to the river. Researchers studying emigrant diaries have determined that in 1849, two-thirds of California-bound travelers took the newer, detour alternate to Humboldt Wells while one-third continued to use the original California Trail down Bishop Creek, and the proportion probably holds through the 1850s (D. Buck, personal communication, 10/20/2012).

Most emigrants knew the Bishop Creek Route simply as part of the Fort Hall Road. Many complained of the rough, rocky road and the deep, narrow canyon but most enjoyed soaking their feet in the large warm spring (Twelve Mile Spring) near the southwest end of the canyon.

Evans-Hatch (2004c) cite the journals of four California-bound emigrants who followed this route. A query of OCTA's COED database yielded mentions of "Bishop's Creek" and "Bishop's cut off" by three more California emigrants and none by Oregon emigrants, for a total of seven emigrants who documented this route. The paucity of mentions is probably in part because the canyon gained its name fairly late in the emigration, when the route was surveyed in 1857 by Francis Bishop for federal development. It is probably also because the canyon was simply considered part of the Fort Hall Road and was neither problematic nor awe-inspiring enough to merit special mention.

Employing Mattes' ratio of 250 emigrants per record for seven emigrant journals, traffic on this route is estimated at about 1,750 persons. However, Unruh estimates the 1849 California emigration at 25,000. If one-third of the 1849 California emigration took the Bishop Creek route, the volume of traffic was closer to 8,333 travelers that year alone. Unruh estimates the total California emigration between 1849 and 1859 at 191,335. If the proportion held through the 1850s, as trails historians report, then some 63,778 emigrants traveled the Bishop Creek Route.

**Conclusion:** In sum, the 1843 Bishop Creek route was not a cutoff but was part of the original, primary route of the California Trail between Thousand Springs Valley and the Humboldt River. Although the number of related trail records suggests that fewer than 2,000 emigrants used this route, trail historians generally concur that about one-third of the California emigration, amounting to some 63,788 travelers, went this way, although the route is rarely mentioned by name in trail journals. At least four miles of original trail remnants and other places of historical and recreational interest exist along the route.

Designation of the Bishop Creek route would add 20.5 new miles to the California and Oregon national historic trails and to the National Trails System.

**41. Secret Pass.** This 30-mile route starts about a mile east of Warm Springs, along US 93 in eastern Nevada. From there pack parties could turn northwest and cross Secret Pass, a gap between the East Humboldt and Ruby Mountain ranges, to join the primary California and Oregon Trail on the Humboldt River. The Secret Pass route is under consideration for addition to the California National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** This trail branches off the Bidwell-Bartleson/Hastings Cutoff about a mile east of Warm Springs, Nevada. It crosses US 93 at Warm Springs and goes northwest over a spur of the East Humboldt Range to strike the headwaters of Secret Creek. The route follows the stream down through Secret Canyon between the East Humboldt and Ruby mountains for 18 miles, approximating the

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alignment of NV-29. It meets the main California and Oregon Trail along the Humboldt River a mile south of Halleck, Nevada. The rocky, narrow trail was a pack route, not well suited for wagons.

**Historical Assets:** No discernable evidence of the pack trail over Secret Pass is known to remain; a two-lane highway occupies most of the trail corridor through the mountains. However, the physical setting and certain topographic features of the trail segment retain their 19th century appearance.

**Historical Summary:** In 1845, explorer John C. Fremont led his second expedition into the Great Basin. He split his command in Independence Valley, east of the Ruby Mountains in eastern Nevada. Fremont's smaller command crossed the Ruby Mountains at Harrison Pass, the route that had been taken by the Bidwell-Bartleson pack party in 1841. His main detachment, commanded by Theodore Talbot and led by mountain man Joseph Walker, went over Secret Pass between the East Humboldt and Ruby Mountains and then continued to the Humboldt River.

In 1846, Lansford W. Hastings, riding east from California with James Hudspeth and James Clyman to promote his new cutoff across the Great Basin, crossed the same pass. Later that summer, the Bryant-Russell pack train, the first party to divert from the main California Trail to try the Hastings Cutoff, also followed the pack trail over Secret Pass; but Hastings himself, guiding wagons several weeks behind the pack train, rejected the pass as too difficult for vehicles. Likewise, the Donner-Reed Party, bringing up the tail end of the 1846 emigration, could not cross there and wound up detouring around the south end of the Ruby Range (Morgan 1993:422).

Pardon Dexter Tiffany, traveling independently on horseback with three companions, crossed the Ruby Mountains at Secret Pass in 1849. The four men evidently were loosely associated with a wagon company that possibly used the pass that season, as well (D. Buck, personal communication, 10/22/2012). James W. Denver wrote of his wagon train crossing Secret Pass in 1850, too (D. Buck, personal communication, 10/20/2012). His is the only firm account of wagons using the route.

Lieutenant Edward G. Beckwith, assistant commander of Captain John Gunnison's ill-fated exploratory expedition of 1853, led a railroad survey through Secret Pass in 1854. Beckwith wrote that the ravine was miry and rocky, "lined with willows and a small growth of cottonwoods, and large fallen rocks obstruct its easy passage, did not the soft soil prohibit it" (Korns and Morgan 1994:fn 73).

A query of OCTA's COED database for the term "secret" identified no mentions in emigrant journals.

**Conclusion:** In sum, this short route was opened in 1845 and is documented to have been used by two emigrant mule-pack parties and one or two wagon parties through 1850. Secret Pass is associated with historically significant figures such as Hastings, Sublette, and Clyman, as well as the Bryant-Russell Party. There are no specific, trail-related places, other than a generally natural setting, of historical interest to trail visitors along the route.

Designation of this route would add 30.5 new miles to the California National Historic Trail and to the National Trails System.

**42. Greenhorn Cutoff.** The Greenhorn Cutoff, approximately 13.5 miles long, carried wagon traffic around Carlin Canyon, southwest of Elko, Nevada. Despite its historical name, this route is not a cutoff but a detour that is several miles longer than the original trail through Carlin Canyon. It is under study for both the California and Oregon national historic trails.

**Route Description:** The Greenhorn Cutoff study route starts about 11 miles southwest of Elko, Nevada, roughly two miles southwest of the Hunter interchange on I-80. It heads west and north in a circuitous route over the Adobe Range, descends to Dry Susie Creek, and follows the creek back down to the Humboldt River. The route rejoins the main Humboldt River route less than a mile east of Carlin, Nevada.

**Historical Assets:** Ruts and swales ascending the eastern-most hillside of the route are on public lands accessible to hikers. The setting remains substantially unchanged from its appearance during the emigrant period, and from the hills visitors have a good view of the Humboldt River Valley, including the area where the Hastings Cutoff enters the valley. This segment also includes some of the most striking topographic features mentioned in several emigrant accounts of the area, including the tiered ascent to the first summit, a deep canyon followed by a rocky ravine, and the highest summit that the emigrants passed on the Humboldt River leg of the emigration.

**Historical Summary:** Emigrants began using the Greenhorn Cutoff as early as 1849 in order to avoid crossing the Humboldt River four times in Carlin Canyon during times of high water. When the water was low, the canyon was a much easier route than the “cutoff,” which entailed a hard, dry climb through the hills south of the river and was about three miles longer than the Carlin Canyon route. Some emigrants did not know that, however, and chose the “cutoff,” assuming it was always the preferable route.

Trails historian Donald Buck has identified two emigrant accounts, those of Alonzo Delano in 1849 and Margaret Frink in 1850, which specifically mention the name of this route as the Greenhorn Cutoff. Frink explained, “A ‘greenhorn cut-off’ is a road which a stranger or new traveler takes believing it to be shorter, but which turns out to be longer than the regular road. There were many such on the plains.”

The Greenhorn Cutoff received its heaviest use by emigrants heading for newly discovered California goldfields in 1849 and 1850. Buck has identified 40 emigrant diaries from 1849 and 55 diaries from 1850 that refer to features along this route. A query of OCTA’s COED database for the term “greenhorn” turned up no mentions in emigrant journals. Based on researcher findings and Mattes’ ratio of 250 emigrants per record, traffic on the cutoff is estimated at around 23,750 persons during just the first two years of the California gold rush.

**Conclusion:** In sum, the Greenhorn Cutoff was a detour around a canyon that was risky or impassable during times of high water. The total volume of traffic on this route, which occurred primarily in 1849–1850, is estimated at around 23,750 emigrants. Trail-related places of historical and recreational interest include original trail remnants and natural landmarks on public lands.

Designation of the Greenhorn Cutoff would add 13.5 new miles to the Oregon and California national historic trails and to the National Trails System.

**43. Goodale’s Cutoff (Jeffrey-Goodale Cutoff).** As originally conceived by proponents of this study, Goodale’s Cutoff consisted of two major parts: the Jeffrey-Goodale Cutoff, between Fort Hall, Idaho, and the vicinity of Mountain Home; and b) two routes that go north and west from Boise, here called the Boise-North 1862 and 1863 Routes. For purposes of analysis, this study evaluates the Jeffrey-Goodale and Boise-North routes individually.

The 315-mile Jeffrey-Goodale Cutoff branches off the Oregon Trail at Fort Hall, Idaho, crosses the Snake River, and swings north and west over lava fields and scablands to rejoin the Oregon Trail about 17 miles northwest of Mountain Home, Idaho. It is under consideration for addition to the Oregon National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** The Jeffrey-Goodale Cutoff route has been researched, mapped, and published by the BLM and the Idaho Historical Society (Hutchinson and Jones 1993). Two variants branch off the main Oregon Trail at the Snake River.

- a. **Historic Fort Hall Variant.** This variant crosses the Snake River at historic Fort Hall in today’s Idaho and goes northwest to Springfield. The route jogs west for about a mile and then turns directly northwest for 29 miles, passing along the western edge of an expansive lava field. It continues around the east side of Big Southern Butte to a junction with the Ferry Butte Variant.

## Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes

- b. **Ferry Butte Variant.** From today's town of Fort Hall (east of historic Fort Hall), this variant goes north around Ferry Butte to the Snake River. From the river, the route continues 17 miles northwest to Taber, Idaho, and then arcs northwesterly for 20 miles, skirting the eastern side of the lava field. Alternatively, from the river crossing travelers could turn westerly for 10 miles to Springfield and join the trail from historic Fort Hall to Big Southern Butte.<sup>48</sup>

From Big Southern Butte the route continues northwest to enter the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory, a restricted area administered by the Department of Energy, Idaho Falls. There it splits into two minor variants.

- c. **Big Lost River Variant.** This variant heads north to Big Lost River and follows it for five miles before turning west to the end of a lava flow located north of Craters of the Moon National Monument.
- d. **Teakettle Butte Variant.** This variant goes northwest past Teakettle Butte, crosses the Big Lost River Variant, and continues north to strike Big Lost River three miles south of Arco, Idaho. There it turns west to join the Big Lost River Variant on US 20/26/93 north of Craters of the Moon.

The recombined route turns southwest, approximating the highway corridor along the northeast edge of the lava flow. It crosses the northwest corner of Craters of the Moon National Monument and follows a sinuous route between the foot of the Pioneer Mountains and the edge of the lava flow. After crossing Huff Creek, the route veers away from the highway and heads west along the foot of the Lake Hills to Point of Rocks. It jogs northwest to Gannett, Idaho, crosses the Wood River Valley, and then turns southwest around Mabelle Hill. Next the route passes north of modern Magic Reservoir and south of Moonstone Mountain to cross Camas Prairie, north of Fairfield, Idaho. At the west end of the prairie, the trail passes south of Castle Rocks and Little Camas Reservoir. The route then goes through Windy Gap, follows West Fork Long Tom Creek south of Boise National Forest, and crosses the Danskin Mountains at Cottonwood Springs. Near its terminus, the trail forks. The two branches rejoin the main Oregon Trail at Ditto Creek and Soles Rest Creek.

From here emigrants followed the main Oregon Trail to Boise, where the Boise-North Routes (described in the following entry) begin.

**Historical Assets:** Trail-related places of historical and recreational interest include intact trail segments on the Jeffrey-Goodale Cutoff approaching Big Southern Butte and crossing Craters of the Moon National Monument. Another segment, with springs and two possible emigrant graves, lies west of Camas Prairie and continues to the cutoff's junction with the primary route of the Oregon Trail at Ditto Creek.

**Historical Summary:** The Jeffrey-Goodale Cutoff across the Snake River Plain originally was a footpath established by Northern Shoshones and other indigenous groups who crossed the lava beds during their seasonal migration to Camas Prairie. Fur traders and explorers traveled this way in the 1820s and 1830s. In the early 1850s, John J. Jeffrey began promoting the route for wagon use in order to drum up business for his ferry operation at the Snake River north of Fort Hall. He convinced a few small wagon parties to try the trail in 1854, and in a July 22 letter to the *Oregon Statesman*, Jeffery boasted that his route had proven four days faster than the river route. The cutoff briefly became known as the "Jeffers Road" (even appearing by that name on an 1857 map of the West), but emigrant traffic along the route dried up in the mid-1850s (Louter 1995; McGill 2009:72). Travelers preferred the main trail along the

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<sup>48</sup> BLM and the Idaho State Historical Society mapped a third variant that goes upstream along the Snake River from the Meek-Gibson ferry crossing to join an 1878 stage route out of Blackfoot, Idaho. This route is not analyzed here because subsequent research has determined it to be a local stage route that post-dates the completion of the transcontinental railroad.

Snake River, as unpleasant as it often was, to the strange volcanic landscape and isolation of the Jeffrey Cutoff.

In 1861, gold was discovered in the vicinity of Orofino, Idaho, north of Boise, and in northeastern Oregon at the settlement of Auburn. The following summer, frontiersman Timothy Goodale led a wagon train of miners out of Colorado and across Wyoming via the Lander Road to Fort Hall, on the Snake River in Idaho. There the company crossed the Snake River and continued west along the Jeffrey Cutoff, rather than travel the primary route of the Oregon Trail along the Snake River. Where the Jeffrey Cutoff rejoins the Oregon Trail beyond the Danskin Mountains, the company followed the primary trail along the Boise River to the vicinity of present-day Boise. According to McGill (2009), the composition of Goodale's wagon train continually changed, expanding and dividing, but while on the Jeffrey-Goodale Cutoff it consisted of about 350 wagons and over 1,100 emigrants. In later years, emigrants who followed the Lander Road into Fort Hall could continue west via the cutoff, which soon became known by Goodale's name. During the mid-1860s, the Idaho territorial government and others improved parts the trail, and emigrants on the cutoff would find, among other things, a waystation at Big Southern Butte and a toll road near the south Boise mines (Louter 1995).

Researchers concur that the Jeffrey-Goodale Cutoff was an important alternate of the Oregon Trail and that a majority of emigrants who took the Lander Trail across Wyoming to Fort Hall continued west via that cutoff. Historical convention holds that some 100,000 emigrants followed the Lander Trail, although the origin of that estimate is unclear. If correct, that would mean that more than 50,000 emigrants took the Jeffrey-Goodale Cutoff.

However, researcher David Louter (1995), in his historical context study for Craters of the Moon National Monument, writes, "Rough estimates suggest...that of the twenty thousand emigrants who left Fort Hall in 1863 and the possibly forty thousand who left there in 1864, 70 percent took the [Jeffrey-Goodale] cutoff." If the Lander Trail traffic estimate is accepted, and if Louter's 70 percent observation carries across the length of the emigration era, then up to 70,000 travelers who went to Fort Hall continued their trip via the cutoff.<sup>49</sup>

Idaho trails researcher Jerry Eichhorst, too, has attempted to characterize the volume of use on the Jeffrey-Goodale Cutoff and various Boise-North routes, based on his analysis of some 1,400 emigrant accounts of travel through Idaho (J. Eichhorst, personal communications, 11/03/2011 and 6/28/2012).<sup>50</sup> He has systematically compiled the most comprehensive, Idaho emigrant-specific database available. From that database, Eichhorst identifies about a thousand accounts that were written by emigrants who crossed Idaho to reach Oregon or California. Of those, some 475 were written by emigrants who bypassed all of the Goodale variants to follow the primary Oregon Trail, the Sublette Cutoff, or some other route into Oregon. Another 491 accounts do not provide enough information to identify the route taken, or were written by emigrants who turned off the Oregon Trail at the Raft River to continue to California (and so are not Oregon emigrants). Of the remaining documentation, Eichhorst identifies 23 accounts of travel on the Jeffrey-Goodale Cutoff. Employing Mattes' ratio of 250 emigrants per known emigrant record, these accounts put the number of travelers on the Jeffrey-Goodale Cutoff at approximately 5,750.

Further, Eichhorst's emigrant data suggest that Louter's 70 percent is a very generous overestimate. Of 65 accounts of emigrants taking the Lander Road to Fort Hall, Eichhorst finds that only six (nine percent) continued on the Jeffrey-Goodale Cutoff (J. Eichhorst, personal communication, 6/28/2012). Nine percent of 100,000 travelers would put only 9,000 emigrants on the Jeffrey-Goodale Cutoff.

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<sup>49</sup> Many travelers after 1848 bypassed Fort Hall by turning off the primary route of the Oregon Trail onto the Hudspeth Cutoff, which passed south of the fort. However, after the Lander Road unofficially opened in 1857, by some estimates 100,000 emigrants followed that northern route to Fort Hall (Del Bene 2012).

<sup>50</sup> A query of OCTA's COED database yielded a total of only six accounts for all variants of Goodale's Cutoff. Since Eichhorst's database is more complete, his is used for this analysis.

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

It seems likely, in fact, that traffic varied across the years of the emigration, probably peaking in the mid- to late 1860s when conflict between emigrants and Indians along the Snake River was at its height and the Jeffrey-Goodale Cutoff offered a way to detour around some of the trouble spots. Eichhorst's nine percent might fairly characterize overall traffic on the trail between 1852 and 1869. Even nine percent, however, is a substantial volume of traffic.

**Conclusion:** In sum, frontiersman Tim Goodale's name became associated with the Jeffrey Cutoff in 1862 when he led a wagon train of eastern Oregon- and Idaho-bound miners out of Colorado and across Idaho. The train consisted of a maximum of about 350 wagons. Members of the company were not settlers bound from the Missouri River for the Willamette Valley but Colorado miners heading for goldfields in northern Idaho and eastern Oregon. However, the route was later used by many thousands of Oregon-bound settlers.

Trails historians concur on the route alignment and the historical significance of the Jeffrey-Goodale Cutoff. The volume of traffic on that route, judging from data on hand, is generously estimated at around 9,000 travelers but, by Louter's projection, could range into the tens of thousands. The cutoff crosses volcanic terrain that provides a unique experience for Oregon Trail visitors, and numerous trail remnants and other places of historical and recreational interest exist along its length.

Designation of the Jeffrey-Goodale Cutoff, including its braids and alternates, would add about 315 new miles to the Oregon National Historic Trail and to the National Trails System.

**44. Goodale's Boise-North 1862 and 1863 Routes.** These routes turn north from the existing Oregon National Historic Trail at Boise, Idaho, and one extends into Oregon to rejoin the primary route of the Oregon Trail near Baker City. They are Goodale's original 1862 route and a later variant attributed to Goodale by researcher Jim McGill, who published an exhaustive 2009 volume about Goodale's work in Idaho. These two associated routes, either 237.5 or 226.5 miles in length (McGill's and Hambleton's distinctive proposed routes, respectively), are under consideration for addition to the Oregon National Historic Trail. Total mileage of the two routes together comes to 280 miles.

**Route Description:** After Goodale's company emerged from the Jeffrey-Goodale Cutoff, the group continued west along the primary route of the Oregon Trail to the vicinity of today's Boise, Idaho. From there, Goodale in 1862 led his wagons northwesterly toward the Brownlee Ferry crossing of the Snake River. In 1863, a party of miners developed a new wagon trail between Boise and Brownlee Ferry.

- a. **Goodale's Original 1862 Route.** Goodale's 1862 route, as mapped by McGill, crosses the Boise River at Boise City and follows Hill Road to the town of Eagle, Idaho. From there it angles northwesterly in a nearly straight alignment, crossing Jackass Gulch to reach Emmett. The trail crosses to the north side of the Payette River and bends west-northwest along the toe slopes that define the north edge of the valley. It jogs a short distance up Sand Hollow and then cuts northwest across high country to cross Big Willow Creek and Little Willow Creek. There it re-enters the Payette River valley and continues to Payette. From Payette the route follows the east bank of the Snake River north to Crystal, where the river begins a broad curve to the west. The trail continues north, leaving the Snake River. It crosses the Weiser River about four miles east of the town of Weiser and follows Mann Creek north, passing east of Sagebrush Hill.

About two miles southeast of today's Mann Creek Recreation Area, the trail turns northeast, crosses rugged uplands, and drops into the Middle Valley. It crosses to the east side of the Weiser River in the vicinity of Midvale. The trail continues northeast to the Little Weiser River and then turns northwest, passing through Cambridge, Idaho, to strike Advent Gulch. It follows the gulch north into mountainous country, then winds west and northwest to meet Middle Brownlee Creek. The trail then follows the creek down a deep canyon to the old Brownlee Ferry site on the Snake River, crossing today's Brownlee Reservoir, in Hell's Canyon, to Oregon.



- b. **1863 Miner's Route.** McGill writes that miners improved an existing pack trail north from Emmett to the Upper Weiser Valley for wagon traffic six months after Goodale took his wagons to Brownlee Ferry in 1862. He credits this more direct route to Goodale, although the frontiersman was not directly involved in its development, because it precipitated from Goodale's 1862 miner's route from Boise to the Snake River.

This 52-mile-long variant branches off the 1862 route at Emmett, Idaho, on the Payette River. There the 1862 route turns northwest, but the 1863 route continues due north across the river and Emmett Bench. The 1863 route continues north up Haw Creek, along the west side of Willow Ridge, and through the east end of Crane Creek Reservoir. It gradually swings northwest and rejoins the 1862 variant about three miles south of Cambridge, Idaho.

- c. **Brownlee Ferry to Flagstaff Hill Section.** From Brownlee Ferry, emigrants continued west to join the primary route of the Oregon Trail near Flagstaff Hill, northeast of present-day Baker City, Oregon. Researchers propose two competing alignments for this wagon route. These are not contemporaneous variants of the same route but different opinions about where the emigrant wagons traveled.

- i. **McGill proposed alignment.** From Hell's Canyon on the Snake River, McGill maps the trail going northwest through Pine, Oregon, and turning south between Immigrant Gulch and Foster Gulch. The route then turns west across Eagle Valley and crosses Eagle Creek at New Bridge, Oregon. It arcs north and then south to the Powder River, crosses near Middle Bridge, Oregon, turns south to Virtue Flat, and then follows Ruckles Creek to join the main Oregon Trail at Flagstaff Hill.<sup>51</sup> McGill has documented numerous trail swales along this route and believes that, due to topographical constrictions, it is the only route wagons could have used through the area. McGill concludes that later roads now overlie portions of the original wagon trail, and that Hambleton's alternative route, described below, would have required more labor to make passable than Goodale's (by then small) party could provide.

Altogether, Goodale's entire 1862 route between Boise and Flagstaff Hill as mapped by McGill is 186 miles in length.

- ii. **Hambleton proposed alignment.** James Hambleton, a semi-retired surveyor with special expertise in historic land records and historic roads, identifies some segments of McGill's route as later roads associated with agricultural and mining activities, and defines a different route as the 1863 wagon road. Hambleton's 43-mile variant route from Brownlee Ferry begins at Pine Creek and largely coincides with McGill's route as to Immigrant Gulch. There the routes diverge, with Hambleton's route going west (as opposed to McGill's northwest) across Eagle Valley and following the Powder River. Where the canyon becomes impassable, the trail crosses the river and climbs onto a bench to parallel the drainage to Lower Powder Valley, staying as much as five miles south of McGill's route. At Ruckles Creek, this route heads due west across the tableland to Flagstaff Hill.

Researcher McGill (2009:172) contends that historical maps of the Goodale route across Oregon are "of minimal value for any detailed accuracy and location" and notes that "the earliest GLO survey plats do not include much in the way of trails." In identifying this leg of the route, therefore, he began with an archival sketch map of the route, presumably drawn by former Idaho State Historian Merle Wells, and then analyzed satellite photos to identify evidence of trail trace in the areas suggested by the map. He examined a contemporaneous report by W. P. Horton that describes the drive, and concluded his research with ground reconnaissance that

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<sup>51</sup> McGill continues Goodale's Cutoff to the goldfields of Auburn, Oregon, but for the purposes of this study, it terminates at its junction with the designated Oregon National Historic Trail at Flagstaff Hill.

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

documents numerous wagon swales and built-road alignments along the route he had identified based on the documentary and photographic evidence.

Roads surveyor Hambleton, on the other hand, argues that the trail remnants McGill documented are not continuous wagon trace indicative of a single, cohesive route, but “only arbitrary sections of wagon swales somewhere in the general direction westward toward the final destination” (Hambleton, personal communication, 7/23/2012). In identifying his preferred route, Hambleton consulted the original Cadastral Survey Records and the original records of the county surveyor. His documentary research tracked the evolution of transportation routes between Baker and the Lower Powder River Valley from about 1862 to the construction and use of SR-86. He then walked along those routes to collect GPS mapping data, which document “continuous wagon swales and traces of an old historic trail still present today...[that] can be identified nearly everywhere along the route barring agricultural developments or other improvements” (Hambleton, personal communication, 5/02/2010). He also cites a Baker County, Oregon, history that mentions that cattle were driven along this well-established route in 1863.

**Historical Assets:** McGill documents approximately 14 miles of wagon trail on his undisputed 1862 and 1863 Boise-North routes northwest of Cambridge, in the Camp Creek area, and in the Advent Gulch area, as well as remnants of the old switchback road ascending from the Brownlee’s Ferry landing. The waters of Brownlee Reservoir have submerged the river landing sites and lower portion of the trail ascending the bluffs on the Oregon side. McGill (2009:179–180, 184) also documents trail remnants on his proposed route near OR-86 between Pine and Richland, Oregon; multiple remnants between Eagle Creek and the Powder River; a segment on the south side of the Powder near the presumed river crossing and north of OR-86; and along Ruckles Creek. Oregon Trail remnants also are visible in the vicinity of Flagstaff Hill. Hambleton has documented wagon swales “nearly everywhere” along his route.

**Historical Summary:** In 1862, Tim Goodale led a company of Colorado miners across eastern Idaho on a cutoff originally named for John Jeffrey (here, the Jeffrey-Goodale Cutoff). From the western end of that trail, Goodale’s party, with miners continually splitting off and emigrants joining up, continued along the primary route of the Oregon Trail to present-day Boise. Near there, Goodale turned off the Oregon Trail with 60 to 70 wagons and crossed the Boise River (McGill 2009:90). He led his party northwesterly up the Payette River to its confluence with the Snake, then continued north and northeast for about 45 miles to Cambridge, Idaho. There the party faced miles of rugged country with no existing wagon trail. McGill (2009:185) writes that the wagon train camped in Cambridge Valley for two weeks while building 27 miles of wagon trail along an existing pack route to the newly established Brownlee Ferry at Hell’s Canyon, at today’s Brownlee Reservoir.

Once across the Snake River and entering today’s state of Oregon, members of the party had to undertake more road building in order to drive their wagons out of the canyon. They next blazed trail to the Powder River and continued west to a junction of the primary route of the Oregon Trail near Flagstaff Hill, in the vicinity of today’s Baker City, Oregon. Rather than joining the trail to western Oregon, however, the wagon party crossed the Oregon Trail and continued southeasterly through Baker City to the mining fields in the area of Auburn, Oregon.

The following year, 1863, miners transformed a pack trail into a wagon trail going north from Emmett, Idaho, to join Goodale’s 1862 wagon road at the head of Brownlee Creek Canyon where it descends to the Brownlee Ferry crossing of the Snake River. The 1863 variant mostly carried mining traffic into and out of Boise Basin, and it became an important route for emigrants settling in central Idaho and eastern Oregon (McGill 2009; Meyer, Four Trail Feasibility Study Route Mapping Form, 4/28/2011).

With publication of McGill’s research in 2009, Goodale’s name has become broadly associated with the Boise-North trail variants. Even so, debate continues, and individuals who have examined the Boise-North variants disagree on their alignments and the significance of their use. McGill, in fact, identifies numerous variants of the Boise-North routes and refers to them collectively as Goodale’s “system of

trails.” Both Goodale’s original 1862 route and the 1863 alternate were primarily used by miners and, to a lesser extent, by emigrants going into central Idaho and eastern Oregon. In making his case for the trails’ historical significance, McGill (2009:97) writes, “Many emigrants, as well as other early travelers, pack trains, miners, stages, and freight wagons, traveled over routes that were part of this trail system as it was developed and became a benefit to the entire Northwest.”

Idaho trails researcher Jerry Eichhorst identifies 11 contemporaneous accounts by travelers who turned north at Boise. Of those 11 accounts, two are dismissed from this analysis because they post-date 1869, which is the end of the Oregon-California emigration era for NHT administrative purposes; and a third is dismissed because it describes crossing the Snake River at the mouth of the Payette, a crossing that is not located on any of the Boise-North variants under consideration here. Six of Eichhorst’s Boise-North accounts reference yet another variant, the Olds Ferry Road, which is addressed separately below. Only two of the 11 accounts reference Goodale’s original 1862 route north to Brownlee Ferry at Hell’s Canyon. Employing Mattes’ ratio of 250 emigrants per record, then, an estimated 500 Oregon-bound travelers followed the 1862 route.

None of Eichhorst’s collection of journals describes emigrant travel over the 1863 variant branching off north of Emmett. The volume of Oregon-bound emigration traffic on this route therefore is estimated at fewer than 250 persons, or incidental. The route appears to have experienced substantial use, however, by east/west mining traffic between Idaho and Oregon.

**Conclusion:** In sum, the volume of Oregon-bound emigration traffic is estimated at about 500 travelers for the original 1862 Goodale Route. The National Park Service is aware of no primary documentation that directly supports use of the 1863 route by Oregon-bound settlers, although some number may have traveled that way. After 1863, the traffic on Goodale’s 1862 and 1863 Boise-North routes consisted mostly of regional commercial traffic related to mining, freighting, and stage service, along with emigrant traffic to settle the inland Pacific Northwest. Traffic volume on the trail between Brownlee Ferry and Baker City is presumed to be the same as that for the 1862 Boise-North Route. Remnants and associated sites of historical interest can be found along these routes.

Designation of the 1862 and 1863 Boise-North Routes, including the trail from the Snake River to Flagstaff Hill, and mapped in their entirety by McGill, would add between 226.5 and 237.5 new miles (depending on whether McGill’s or Hambleton’s route from the Snake River to Flagstaff Hill is selected) to the Oregon National Historic Trail and to the National Trails System.

**45. Olds Ferry Road.** The Olds Ferry Road branches off Tim Goodale’s Boise-North 1862 route north of Crystal, Idaho and continues 20 miles to the vicinity of Farewell Bend. It is not among the routes listed in the original study legislation, but was added later by the planning team in response to scoping comments. It is under consideration for addition to the Oregon National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** This trail branches off Goodale’s 1862 Boise-North wagon route about two and a half miles north of Crystal, Idaho, east of the Snake River. It goes northwest, paralleling US 95, and passes through Weiser. The trail continues directly west-northwest across the plain to a bend in the Snake River at Porters Island. It then follows the north bank of the Snake River to the Olds Ferry Crossing south of Farewell Bend, where it joins the currently designated route of the Oregon National Historic Trail.

**Historical Assets:** Remnants of the Olds Ferry Road are visible along the north bank of the Snake River northwest to Weiser, Idaho.

**Historical Summary:** In 1862 or 1863, Reuben P. Olds began serving mining traffic by establishing a ferry across the Snake River near Farewell Bend, thereby opening (or perhaps sustaining) a second trail

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

variant west of Boise (Huntley 1979; Haines 1981).<sup>52</sup> Emigrant wagons would follow the Goodale route down the Payette River Valley, branch off onto the Olds Ferry Road, and then cross the Snake via Olds Ferry to the primary route of the Oregon Trail at Farewell Bend.

McGill (2009:126) notes the existence of a lightly used “connecting side-route” along the east side of the Snake River from the primary route of the Oregon Trail at Hudson’s Bay Company Fort Boise to Olds Ferry. Wally Meyer, a retired BLM employee who spent many years mapping the Oregon Trail across federal lands, finds that “a great majority of the Goodale traffic” used the Olds Ferry Road to Farewell Bend (W. Meyer, personal communication, 4/6/2011). Specifically, says Meyer, this route was “a popular and heavily used route for Oregon-bound emigrants” as opposed to local and regional mining traffic (Meyer, Four Trail Feasibility Study Route Mapping Form, 4/28/2011). He cites McGill’s own work (2009:105, 106, 109, 117, 118, 127) as supporting his conclusion that, beginning in 1863, most emigrant traffic going north from Boise crossed the Snake River at Olds Ferry.

Researcher Jerry Eichhorst, from his database of some 1,400 accounts of emigration across Idaho, identifies six accounts of travel on the Olds Ferry Road. However, a number of these accounts were written by family members or others traveling in the same group. When he eliminates these duplications, Eichhorst identifies only three wagon parties that traveled this route, “one group in each of 1864, 1865, and 1866.” These parties comprised a total of 97 persons (J. Eichhorst, personal communication, 12/19/2012 and 12/20/2012). However, Mattes’ ratio of 250 emigrants per written record (regardless of multiple accounts from the same party) in conjunction with six accounts produces an estimate of 1,500 emigrants on the route.

**Conclusion:** In sum, the road to Olds Ferry was established circa 1862. Researchers reach different conclusions concerning the use and importance of the route. Traffic estimates range from three well documented parties comprising 97 emigrants, to some 1,500 emigrants, and possibly as many as several thousand.<sup>53</sup>

Designation of this route would add 20 new miles to the Oregon National Historic Trail and to the National Trails System.

**46. North Side Alternate Route.** This is a 155-mile alternate along the north side of the Snake River in Idaho between American Falls and the Malad River area in Idaho, where it links to the North Alternate Oregon Trail.<sup>54</sup> It is under consideration for addition to the Oregon National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** The North Side Alternate study route leaves the trunk route of the combined Oregon and California trail at American Falls, crossing to the north side of the Snake River at American Falls dam. It follows the river across a largely roadless area for about 26 miles to Lake Walcott, where it enters Minidoka National Wildlife Refuge. The route then keeps to high ground around the north shore of the lake. At about the Minidoka and Blaine county line, the river and the trail turn southwest for nine miles. The route briefly leaves the river south of Rupert, Idaho, to cut across a bend in the river, and it then rejoins the river at Heyburn. It continues westerly, leaving the Snake again in the vicinity of Milner

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<sup>52</sup> Oregon Trail historian Aubrey Haines (1981:348) cites both the House Committee on Roads in 1925 and the WPA Writer’s Project in 1939 as stating that the ferry was established in 1862. Huntley (1979) writes that Olds, a former employee of the Hudson’s Bay Company, purchased an existing store at that location in 1863 and began operating a ferry at that time.

<sup>53</sup> Wally Meyer (personal communication, 7/27/2012) observes, “The emigrant totals stated [in this analysis] are probably extremely low since we don’t know the percentage of wagon trains accompanied by diarists. Since the totals given are very problematic and misleading, they should be deleted.” The National Park Service considers these estimates to be a helpful, “order of magnitude” tool in evaluating whether a study route was integral or incidental to the currently designated national historic trail; and in fact, that tool appears to overestimate historic traffic significantly on trails for which use was well documented.

<sup>54</sup> The described route is that provided in Hutchison and Jones 1993. Background information is largely from Eichhorst (2011a).

Lake and crossing I-84N twice on the way to Shoshone Falls, Idaho. The study route hugs the river for another 25 miles to Paynes Ferry, located south of Thousand Springs, where it climbs out of the Snake River Canyon to meet the North Alternate Oregon Trail at the Malad River.

**Historical Assets:** Researchers have identified several sections of historic wagon trail on different braids along this route. Clark's Crossing is a three-part segment consisting of a long grade (now known as Baggett's Grade) on the south Snake River canyon wall, a historic ferry crossing, and Clark's Grade on the north canyon wall. Baggett's Grade is a long, gentle slope, whereas Clark's grade is steep and hand-hewn from the native rock, with a spectacular opening at the top of the rim. This crossing, which dates to about 1866, was used by stagecoach companies and by freighters traveling between Kelton and Boise. Some researchers believe that it also was used by emigrants. The Shoshone Falls trail segment is a highly visible, six-mile stretch of original wagon road that crosses scablands left by the Bonneville Flood. Traces along this segment include wheel ruts cut deeply into the rock and places where rocks were removed to create a passage across rough outcroppings. The Blue Lakes trail segment is approximately three miles of trail on the opposite side of the river from Twin Falls. The segment, which crosses BLM, state, and private lands, ends at a golf course in Jerome, Idaho.

**Historical Summary:** Hutchinson and Jones (1993:173) describe this route in *Emigrant Trails of Southern Idaho* as a possible Oregon Trail segment that merited additional study. Researcher Clair Ricketts in 2002 proposed the North Side Alternate as part of the Oregon Trail based on his analysis of an 1844 journal by the Rev. Edward E. Parrish. Researcher Jerry Eichhorst in 2011 reanalyzed the Parrish journal and the Ricketts report and concluded that the trail along the north side of the river between American Falls and the Malad River is a later trail used by freighters and stagecoaches but not by the overland emigration.

The history of the trail is murky. Two fur-trapping parties may have traveled this way in 1811–1812 (Eichhorst 2011a:3). The Rev. Parrish in 1844 purportedly was the first emigrant to follow the route, followed by Father A. M. Blanchet, who rode this way on horseback in 1847 while sending his wagons along the south-side emigrant trail. Dr. Thomas White in 1852 wrote that he had been told that the Hudson's Bay Company used this north-side route as a pack trail, that it was a much shorter route to Boise than the south-side wagon trail, and that it had better water and grass along much of its length (Hutchinson and Jones 1993:173). However, White apparently had no firsthand knowledge of the route and does not indicate it was ever used for wagon travel. Finally, the North Side Alternate appears on an 1879 survey map as the "Old Emigrant Road."

Ricketts' analysis of the 1844 journal correlates Parrish's descriptions of landmarks and stream crossings with the geography of the North Side Alternate Route, but Eichhorst correlates those same descriptions with the primary Oregon Trail route along the south side of the river and disputes the correlation on the north side. Eichhorst suggests that Ricketts was misled by Parrish's entry about crossing the Snake River when he (Eichhorst) believes that, in reality, Parrish would have been crossing the Portneuf River. Misidentifications of stream crossings are common among trail journalists. Eichhorst further points out that Parrish's journal indicates foreknowledge of trail conditions as much as 25 miles ahead, which implies that Parrish was using a published emigrant guide. Had he actually been the first emigrant on the North Side Alternate Route, Parrish would have had no guide and no knowledge of the trail ahead.

In addition, some of the physical traces of the north side trail are not consistent with those of other known emigrant trails. Clark's Grade, in particular, is an emigrant trail anomaly, described by a trail researcher as "steep and hand-hewn from the rock wall [of the cliff] with a spectacular opening at the top of the rim."<sup>55</sup> Emigrants did not stop to hew rock, nor did they carry explosives or tools to blast openings. They simply took an easier route—an existing one, if possible. The quoted description sounds

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<sup>55</sup> This description is from an unattributed form submitted by an OCTA trails researcher in the mid-1990s.

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like a later, engineered grade created for commercial, military, or other public purposes, as opposed to an expedient trail created informally by repeated use.

Ricketts also reports the existence of north-side wagon ruts worn into the rock and quotes former Idaho State Historian Merle Wells, who stated that it would take thousands of wagons to cut such grooves. If thousands of Oregon Trail wagons had passed that way, certainly many emigrants in addition to Parrish would have noted the route in their journals. However, no such journals have been located by the National Park Service or identified by other researchers. Eichhorst reports that, in his reviews of nearly 1,400 emigrant accounts of passage through Idaho, he has found not a single account of an emigrant wagon on the North Side Alternate (Eichhorst 2011a:1). Even accepting the Parrish journal as a north-side account, use of that route by a single emigrant or party would not establish that route as nationally significant.

Eichhorst concurs, however, that the grooves described by Ricketts were created by wagons. He writes, "I do not doubt that wagon usage created the ruts and grooved rocks noted by Ricketts. I believe, however, that these ruts and scars were made in later years by freight wagons and local traffic such as farm and ranch wagons" (Eichhorst 2011a:2).

**Conclusion:** In sum, the authenticity of this study route as an emigrant-era branch of the Oregon Trail is highly doubtful based on current evidence. No known Oregon Trail journal mentions wagon travel along this route, and recent research indicates that it likely was a later road developed for commercial uses. Trail ruts are extant, but they can be explained by later commercial and local wagon traffic. The Idaho Chapter of OCTA states that it does not support addition of the North Side Alternate route to the Oregon National Historic Trail.

Designation of this route would add 155 new miles to the Oregon National Historic Trail and to the National Trails System.

**47. North Alternate Oregon Trail.** Not to be confused with the proposed North Side Alternate of the Oregon Trail, the North Alternate Oregon Trail begins at Upper Salmon Falls on the Snake River four miles downstream from Salmon Falls Creek and the later Paynes Ferry. The 64.5-mile trail rejoins the main Oregon Trail (coming from Three Island Crossing near Glenns Ferry, Idaho) north of Hot Springs Reservoir, eight miles east of Mountain Home, Idaho. It is under study for addition to the Oregon National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** This route has long been confused with the Kelton Stage Road. The North Alternate Oregon Trail is a separate route that is overlapped in places by that later stage and freight road (Eichhorst 2011b).

The North Alternate Oregon Trail study route begins at the Trappers Ferry site just upstream from Upper Salmon Falls.<sup>56</sup> Travelers crossed the Snake River by ferry and ascended the basalt-clad canyon rim via Billingsley Creek Canyon, which Eichhorst (2011b:53) describes as a "narrow, steep stretch less than two miles in length nestled against the steep Snake River Canyon Wall." The route crosses the Malad River at a difficult ford just above Malad Gorge, continues northwesterly across US 26, and passes the eastern tip of Bliss Point to strike Clover Creek. There it swings south around Pioneer Reservoir. The North Alternate Oregon Trail is joined by the Kelton stage and freight road at Clover Creek Station, west of Bliss Point. Eichhorst (2011b:62) notes that many emigrant deaths, usually attributed to some disease contracted from contaminated water, occurred over the next 50 miles beyond this watercourse.

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<sup>56</sup> In 1852, emigrants crossed the river on a ferry operated by several retired mountain men just upstream from Upper Salmon Falls. When the Paynes Ferry was built in 1869, traffic began crossing there, instead, to follow a new stage road due north. This road connected with the North Alternate Oregon Trail at the Malad Gorge crossing.

From here the study route leaves the creek and heads northwest across dry lands, generally sharing a corridor with the Kelton Road on a steep climb over King Hill. It then continued northwesterly for the next 13 miles, toward but not quite reaching Teapot Dome. This stretch of original, intact trail trace passes Blair Trail Reservoir and crosses Cold Springs Creek at Cold Springs Stage Station. About two miles beyond the station is the Ryegrass Creek burial site, where on Sept. 10, 1852, emigrant Cecelia Adams reported seeing “10 graves all in a row.” The North Alternate Oregon Trail branches away from the Kelton stage road three miles east of Hot Springs Creek Reservoir and heads west to join the primary route of the Oregon Trail on Hot Springs Creek, about a mile north of the reservoir.

**Historical Assets:** Upper Salmon Falls historically consisted of two Snake River rapids where Shoshones and Bannocks gathered to catch salmon. Emigrants bartered with the native people there to obtain the fish, which was a great help since many had nearly used up the food they had brought with them from the States. The area is accessible to visitors today. However, there are few visible remains at the site of the ferry crossing, as the river has been dammed and the original channel is submerged; and development and agricultural use on both sides of the river have destroyed nearly all trace of the trail there.

Three sections of trail remnants exist near the Malad River crossing in Malad State Park. A river crossing used after construction of a wagon bridge in 1869 retains a half-mile trace on the south side of the gorge; and an east-west remnant of a pre-bridge route that crossed the river above the gorge extends for three-quarters of a mile across state park land. Another half-mile segment of pre-1869 route starts at the modern highway and extends east to private land on the south side of the river and the head of the gorge. Due to damming and withdrawal of water for agricultural purposes, the Malad River does not flow as fast and high as it did during the emigrant era, but the surrounding landscape appears much as it did in the mid-1800s. On the north side of the river is a stage station site; no remains of the structure are visible. Intermittent trail trace, including a swale over four feet deep, is visible in places between the Malad River and Clover Creek station.

At Cold Springs Stage Station the original rock house still stands. A large depression surrounded by small, hand-placed rocks in the Ryegrass Creek area is thought to be a mass emigrant grave. Ground penetrating radar used to investigate the area in September 2011 identified 14 trailside anomalies that are the size and shape of graves (Cannon 2012). The King Hill Creek Segment of original trail trace extends 13 miles from King Hill Stage Station to the Kelton Road, two miles beyond the Ryegrass Creek burial locale.

**Historical Summary:** Use of the North Alternate Oregon Trail began in 1852 when a group of out-of-work fur trappers established a ferry across the Snake River about a mile above Upper Salmon Falls. To drum up business, the trappers warned emigrants of a 30-mile desert ahead on the south-side trail and told them that the new route on the north side of the river was shorter and had better grass and water.

After crossing on the ferry, which consisted of two wagons roped together, emigrants made their way in a northerly direction several miles from the river. Traffic climbed out of the Snake River Gorge via Billingsley Creek Canyon and next forded the Malad River. Upon meeting Clover Creek several miles east of King Hill, many members of the company fell ill for reasons that may be related to the creek water, and a number of them died over the next 50 miles of the route. Several trail diaries mention the many graves along this stretch.

Eichhorst (2011a) estimates that between 1852 and 1854, two-thirds of the Oregon emigration (15,000 to 20,000 people) traveled the North Alternate Oregon Trail. He found only two references to emigrants on this route after 1854.<sup>57</sup> Eichhorst also identifies 45 diaries and 54 reminiscences and other records created by people who traveled this route (J. Eichhorst, personal communication, 4/03/2012).

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<sup>57</sup> Eichhorst writes, “Basically, I believe that there was one major factor which caused the North Alternate Oregon Trail to not be used after 1854. Emigrant travel to Oregon all but stopped in 1855. The number of emigrants was drastically less than the previous 3 boom years....With virtually nobody on the main trail, one

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**Conclusion:** In sum, an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 emigrants used the North Alternate Oregon Trail, largely from 1852 through 1854. Trail-related places of historical interest include several extant traces of wagon trail, trail-related sites and landmarks, an emigrant-era building, and possible emigrant graves.

Designation of the North Alternate Oregon Trail would add about 65 new miles to the Oregon National Historic Trail and to the National Trails System.

**48. Raft River to the Applegate Trail.** This 546.5-mile route branches off the Oregon Trail at the Raft River in Idaho, and heads across northeastern Nevada to the Humboldt River (using both the Bishop Creek Cutoff route described above and the currently designated diversion to Humboldt Wells). It then follows the Humboldt River across Nevada to historic Lassen's Meadows at today's Rye Patch Reservoir near Imlay, Nevada, where it meets the Applegate Trail/Southern Route to Oregon. The Raft River to the Applegate Trail (historically known as the Fort Hall Road) is already designated as part of the California National Historic Trail and is under study here for the Oregon National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** The Raft River to the Applegate Trail study route follows the designated route of the California Trail through Southern Idaho and Nevada. The study route branches off the primary route of the Oregon Trail at the Raft River Parting of the Ways, 28 miles east of Burley, Idaho. It heads southwesterly across the Raft River Valley, crossing the river twice on the way to Cassia Creek. It then follows the creek west through a pass between the Jim Sage and Cotterel Mountains and continues through the community of Elba. The study route leaves the creek, heading south along the Jim Sage Mountains to the town of Almo. It continues southwest through Circle Creek Basin (formerly called Pyramid Circle) in the City of Rocks National Reserve and National Historic Landmark. From there the route goes over Granite Pass and onto the next mountain range to the west, at the rim of the Great Basin. There the route enters the Great Basin physiographic province and works its way down to Goose Creek, clipping the northwest corner of Utah before entering Nevada and continuing southwest past Record Bluff. The route leaves Goose Creek to join Little Creek, following that stream for several miles. It continues past three emigrant campsites (Rock Spring, Emigrant Springs, and Chicken Springs) and enters Thousand Springs Valley in northeastern Nevada.

The study route next crosses Thousand Springs Valley and follows drainages of Brush Creek to Willow Creek. From here most emigrants followed the Bishop Creek Route (another feasibility study route that is described above), but many travelers bypassed Bishop Creek to go to Humboldt Wells (present-day Wells, Nevada). From there the route runs along the north bank of the Humboldt River, sharing a corridor with today's I-80, and crosses Marys River, a Humboldt tributary, at the town of Deeth. The study route and I-80 continue to Elko, where the BLM's California Trail Interpretive Center is located. The study route and highway continue down the north side of the Humboldt River for another 14 miles. There the route leaves the highway to detour through scenic Carlin Canyon, where visitors can view trail remnants and interpretive exhibits.

The Raft River to the Applegate Trail route then passes through the town of Carlin, sharing its alignment with I-80 over Emigrant Pass. Two and a half miles west of the pass, the trail leaves the freeway, heads down Emigrant Canyon, and descends to Gravelly Ford on the Humboldt River east of Beowawe. Trail remnants cross public and private land in this area. Gravelly Ford was an important milestone where many emigrants heading to California crossed to the south side of the Humboldt River. Travelers bound for Oregon would stay on the north side, as the Applegate Trail/Southern Route to Oregon branches off across the Black Rock Desert from the north-side Humboldt River trail.

From Gravelly Ford, the river and study route make a broad swing north around a series of mountain ranges. The north-side trail crosses Boulder Valley and passes Stony Point, a narrow constriction at the

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can imagine that the trappers running the ferry gave up and moved on. With no guidebooks noting this route, there would be no reason for any future traveler to suspect that there was another route across the river they could travel at Salmon Falls" (J. Eichhorst, personal communication, 5/03/2012).



toe of the Sheep Creek Range. It continues through the community of North Battle Mountain, Nevada, and through Emigrant Canyon at the south end of the Osgood Mountains, reaching its northernmost point at Button Point, at the north end of the Sonoma Range. From there the river and study route turn southwest past the town of Winnemucca, which is on the south side of the river, and continue to Lassen's Meadows at the Big Bend of the Humboldt River. Here is the junction where the Applegate Trail/Southern Route to Oregon branches west, away from the Humboldt River trail corridor, toward the Black Rock Desert. The old trail junction, in the rich pastureland once known as Lassen's Meadows, is now submerged beneath the Rye Patch Reservoir. That is the terminus of this study route.

**Historical Assets:** The Raft River Parting of the Ways, where the California and Oregon trails split in today's Idaho, exists on private land. Original trail remnants are marked and nearby emigrant graves are fenced and marked. Nearby are several miles of extant trail remnant crossing public lands, both west (Oregon Trail) and south (California Trail) of the junction.

The first crossing of the Raft River is south of Heglar Canyon. Emigrants forded there in order to take advantage of better forage on the east side of the river. The second crossing is located four miles north of Malta, Idaho. Both are on private property. McClendon Spring, which provided the only potable water between the second river crossing and Cassia Creek Canyon, is located at a BLM primitive-recreation site three miles northwest of Malta, Idaho. Geological features at City of Rocks, today a state and federal national reserve and National Historic Landmark, are mentioned in many emigrant journals. Key landmarks in the reserve include Circle Creek Basin, Pinnacle Pass, Twin Sisters, and the junction of the Salt Lake Cutoff. Original trail remnants are abundant within the reserve and are particularly visible south of Pinnacle Pass and west of the junction of the Salt Lake Cutoff with the main California Trail. A trail monument commemorating the Mormon Battalion is located on private land at Granite Pass. Multiple original wagon swales are located on private land between the pass and Birch Creek. Record Bluff, on private land in Goose Creek Valley, Nevada, is considered the finest display of emigrant names and dates in Nevada and California. Rock Spring, the site of an emigrant campground, is located along the BLM's California Trail Back Country Byway in northeastern Nevada. The trail passes another emigrant campsite at Emigrant Springs, also on private land.

Thousand Springs Valley is the site of numerous springs, both hot and cold, at today's privately owned Winecup Ranch, and numerous diaries recount the emigrants' passage through this area. Trail remnants are abundant there and BLM has established the California Back Country Byway, an unpaved driving route that allows visitors to access portions of the original trail. From unpaved roads above the community of Wells, visitors can see wetlands where the original "Humboldt Wells" were located and can walk trail swale toward the headwaters of the Humboldt River. BLM's California Trail Interpretive Center is located a few miles west of Elko. Trail remnants and interpretive signs can be visited on BLM land in Carlin Canyon. Gravelly Ford and related wagon trace exist on private land. The junction of the Applegate Trail/Southern Route to Oregon and the Humboldt River corridor of the California Trail, along with much of Lassen's Meadows, is submerged beneath Rye Patch Reservoir.

**Historical Summary:** In 1843, just two years after the first overland emigrant party reached California, mountain man Joseph R. Walker led a party of 25 California-bound emigrants by a new route from the Snake River in Idaho into northeastern Nevada. Walker's route left the Oregon Trail at the Raft River in southern Idaho, went through City of Rocks and over Granite Pass into today's state of Nevada, and then crossed Thousand Springs Valley to descend Bishop Creek to the Humboldt River. The following year, the 46-member Stephens-Townsend-Murphy party followed Walker's wagon trace down the Raft River Valley and on to the Humboldt River, soon to become the first emigrant party to take wagons through the Sierra Nevada to California. The oncoming California emigration quickly adopted the Raft River route as the main trail to the Humboldt River. Beginning in 1846, Oregon-bound travelers also used this trail to reach the junction of the newly opened Applegate/Southern Route to Oregon, located near Imlay, Nevada.

A query of OCTA's COED database for "City of Rocks," "Rock City," and "Pyramid Rock" (all travelers on this trail passed through City of Rocks, and many journals remark on it) identified only five accounts

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written by Oregon-bound emigrants, compared to 51 accounts by California-bound emigrants. All of these accounts date between 1849 and 1864. Using Mattes' (1988) ratio of 250 emigrants per record, an estimated 1,250 Oregon-bound emigrants traveled this trail. This is clearly an underestimate, as the query results do not include several well-known companies documented to have traveled the Applegate Trail in 1846 and 1847. Those companies would add approximately 700 persons for a total estimate of 1,950.

This revised estimate is in line with the volume of traffic suggested by historical documentation. Oregon Trail historian Devere Helfrich (1971, 1976) researched written records of the Oregon emigration over the Applegate Trail/Southern Route to Oregon. His year-by-year figures indicate that approximately 1,605 emigrants traveled the Applegate between 1846 and 1859, but Helfrich notes that information is lacking for some years. In addition, another 50 or so emigrants that Helfrich did not report followed the Applegate Trail to Oregon in 1859 (see the 1919 reminiscences of William Henry and Lavina Ann McCormick at <http://familytreemaker.genealogy.com/users/s/m/i/Peggy-J-Smith/GENE2-0001.html>). The combined total based on written record of the emigration comes to about 1,665 emigrants.

A second COED database query was conducted to identify journals and reminiscences of travelers on the Applegate Trail west of Goose Lake in northeastern California. Most of those who reached that point on the Applegate Trail had gone by way of the Raft River route through City of Rocks and along the Humboldt River; this query is just a different sampling of written records. The query identified 38 records, dating between 1846 and 1866, that relate to Oregon-bound emigrants on the Applegate Trail west of Goose Lake. Using Mattes' ratio, this places an estimated 9,500 travelers on the trail.

Similarly, trails researcher Jerry Eichhorst reports 40 accounts of emigrants who passed through Idaho and followed all or most of the Raft River to the Applegate Trail route, continuing on to Oregon. Using Mattes' ratio, Eichhorst's accounts estimates the volume of traffic at 10,000 persons.

**Conclusion:** In sum, researchers have solid documentation for use of the Raft River to the Applegate Trail route by approximately 2,000 westbound emigrants to Oregon, with most accounts dating to 1846–1847 and 1852–1853. Estimates of traffic volume based on Mattes' ratio of travelers per trail record, however, range narrowly between about 9,500 and 10,000 emigrants. The latter set of numbers likely overestimates the volume of traffic on this route, since the emigrants' troubles on the Applegate Trail were widely publicized and mentioned in many reports. Trail-related places of historical interest along the Raft River to the Applegate Trail route are numerous and include trail ruts and swales, significant landmarks, emigrant inscriptions, stream crossings, a federally operated trail interpretive center, and the City of Rocks National Reserve and National Historic Landmark.

Designation of the Raft River to the Applegate Trail route as Oregon National Historic Trail would add 546.5 miles to that NHT but no new miles to the National Trails System, as it is already designated California National Historic Trail.

**49. Applegate Trail, or Southern Route to Oregon.** This 825-mile trail begins at the Rye Patch Reservoir near Imlay, Nevada, where it leaves the California National Historic Trail. It crosses the Black Rock Desert and the Warner Mountains (at Fandango Pass, California), continues west to Grants Pass, Oregon, and turns north to end at Dallas, Oregon. The Applegate Trail is already designated as part of the California National Historic Trail and is under study for possible addition to the Oregon National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** The Applegate Trail, known to emigrants as the Southern Route or South Road to Oregon, branches off of the Humboldt River trail corridor at Lassen's Meadows, near present Rye Patch Reservoir at Imlay, Nevada. It heads generally northwest through sagebrush steppe to Antelope Pass, an easy passage through the Antelope Range, and then crosses Kamma Pass. The route descends to Rabbithole Spring and follows a wash a mile to the northwest, where the 1854 Nobles Trail branches off to the west. At that junction, emigrants caught their first glimpse of the distant landmark of Black Rock.

The Applegate/Southern Route to Oregon continues northwest and, after crossing the Quinn River (which rarely contains running water in late summer), enters the Black Rock Desert.

The route proceeds to Black Rock Springs, where the original 1852 Nobles Trail branches off to the southwest. The Applegate/Southern Route to Oregon then turns north to Double Hot Springs and goes on to Mud Meadows Reservoir, where it bends west. It strikes Fly Canyon and follows that drainage southwest to the north end of High Rock Lake. Here the trail turns northwest again and passes through narrow High Rock Canyon to reach High Rock Spring. It continues northwest across Massacre Creek, curves west, and passes between Painted Point and the Black Hills to Fortynine Lake in Long Valley, Nevada. From there, the route runs south of Vya, Nevada, and climbs over an unnamed pass north of Fortynine Mountain. It descends Fortynine Creek to enter California.

Next the study route crosses Surprise Valley, passing Seyferth Hot Springs, to reach the south end of Upper Alkali Lake. The exact routes emigrants took across this and other lakebeds varied, depending on the water level. In dry years they could drive across the playas but in wet years they had to go around, staying to higher ground. The wagon route continues across Upper Alkali Lake to the emigrant campground at Plum Creek, then turns north and then west to go over Fandango Pass in the Warner Mountains.<sup>58</sup> The emigrants next entered Fandango Valley and followed it until the way becomes blocked by lava beds; they then turned west and crossed Willow Creek and Lassen Creek at today's County Road 133C. Emigrants continued west over the bluff to Goose Lake, then went west along high ground, passing south of Blue Mountain to Pothole Springs. From there the route goes past Steele Swamp and across the bed of Clear Lake (and through Clear Lake National Wildlife Refuge), emerging at Fiddler's Green, another emigrant campsite. It continues northwest for six miles, to a trail junction where the Burnett Cutoff branches off and heads south to link with the Lassen Trail.

The Applegate/Southern Route to Oregon turns north to historic Bloody Point, where Modoc Indians and emigrants repeatedly clashed, then swings west and passes north of the town of Tulelake, California.<sup>59</sup> The route meets the alignment of CA-139 and follows it northwest along the Lost River, briefly entering Oregon. Emigrants crossed the river at a natural ford they called Stone Bridge, which today forms the base of the historic Anderson-Rose Diversion Dam, and then turned south back into California to go around Lower Klamath Lake. From there the route follows the boundary between Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge and Modoc National Forest. West and south of Lower Klamath Lake, the Yreka Trail (another study route) branches off to the south. The Applegate Trail/Southern Route to Oregon turns northwest and passes Big Spring at the head of Hot Creek. The route enters Oregon and immediately crosses US 97 southwest of Lake Miller. A mile later the route splits into two short variants. The original 1846 emigrant company, traveling in a dry year, was able to stay in the bottoms along the Klamath River, whereas later travelers took a higher but shorter route through Bear Valley. The routes cross the Klamath River at different locations, and the route taken by emigrants in 1847 crosses Bear Valley National Wildlife Refuge. The variants converge on the north side of the river west of Keno.

For the next 31 miles, the Applegate Trail/Southern Route roughly parallels OR-66 to Emigrant Lake. There it turns northwest, passes Ashland, Oregon, and parallels I-5 toward Medford, Oregon. About midway between Phoenix and Medford, Oregon, the trail splits. The original route of the trail continues through Medford and turns west at Central Point, Oregon. However, after gold was discovered in the area, emigrants turned west toward the new town of Jacksonville, where they could receive aid and buy supplies. The two variants rejoin a couple miles west of Central Point and the trail continues along the south bank of the Rogue River and beyond Grants Pass, Oregon, still sharing a broad corridor with I-5. A mile beyond Grants Pass, it crosses the Rogue River and turns north, paralleling I-5 through Pleasant Valley to Grave Creek, the site of a pioneer burial and a related, privately operated interpretive center.

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<sup>58</sup>Researcher Richard Silva (2000:7) identifies Plum Creek as today's Heath Creek.

<sup>59</sup> The historic Bloody Point is not the Bloody Point marked on modern topographic maps, but is in the same general vicinity.

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The route continues to Wolf Creek and follows the corridor of I-5 north to Canyon Creek Pass. The emigrants of 1846 suffered greatly on the winding descent of Canyon Creek, being forced to follow a narrow defile through icy waters to the South Umpqua River at Canyonville. Today the descent is easily traversed by motorists along I-5. The Applegate route continues north, winding through rugged country and paralleling the South Umpqua River. It passes Myrtle Creek, Oregon, and continues to Roseburg. In 1846, heavy rains swelled the North Umpqua River until it was too high for emigrants to ford at Winchester, the preferred crossing. Instead, they detoured northwest into Garden Valley and crossed at the lower ford, about two miles above the confluence of the North Umpqua with the South Umpqua River. After 1846, most emigrants continued north from Roseburg and crossed the North Umpqua at Winchester. The two routes rejoin at Wilbur. The study route next follows Sutherlin Creek north to Sutherlin and parallels state highway 99 through Union Gap to the town of Oakland. (This route through Union Gap is a geographically minor but historically important correction to the currently designated route, which follows the I-5 corridor.) Here, in the vicinity of Cabin Creek, seven families of the 1846 Applegate wagon train became stranded for the winter. They remained there until spring, when the mud dried enough to permit travel.

The study route next ascends Cabin Creek and crosses Pleasant Valley to Yoncalla Creek. Here the currently designated Applegate route of the California National Historic Trail splits.

- a. **The original 1846 route of the Applegate Trail/Southern Route to Oregon** turns northeast through Cottage Grove. There it strikes the Coast Fork of the Willamette River and follows the stream north. It passes east of Creswell and continues through Eugene, where the 1846 emigrants encountered Skinner's Cabin, the first sign of white settlement in Oregon. Today a replica cabin and interpretation are located near the site. Next the Applegate Trail follows the west bank of the Willamette River to a crossing of the Long Tom River. It joins the western alternate on the west side of the river.
- b. **The Pass Creek** branch of the designated California NHT through the Calapooya Mountains is not demonstrated by historical research to have been used by emigrants entering Oregon via the Applegate Trail in the 1840s, but is known to be a later road. Lt. Henry L. Abbott observed in his Pacific Railroad survey report that the pass was but recently discovered and the road "was not fully completed" when his party passed through in 1855 (United States War Department 1857:106). The Pass Creek Road, as Abbot called it, was built primarily to carry to carry freight, stage, and other commercial traffic between Oregon and California. Nonetheless, because it is already congressionally designated as part of the Applegate Trail of the California National Historic Trail and because it was used by later Oregon immigrants, the alternate is included here. This variant of the Applegate Trail/Southern Route to Oregon goes north to the town of Yoncalla, where members of the Applegate emigrant family who had arrived in 1843 resettled in 1849 and 1850. From Yoncalla, the trail follows Pass Creek to the community of Anlauf, then turns north across several drainages to strike Coyote Creek and Gillespie Corners. It continues north, running beneath today's Fern Ridge Lake for about five miles, and rejoins the 1846 trail at the Long Tom River.

Next, the route passes through Monroe and continues north, paralleling Muddy Creek through the William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge. Southwest of Corvallis the route crosses Marys River, where emigrants had to disassemble their wagons and float them across the water. From there it passes through Corvallis. North of Logsdon Ridge it jogs northwest, passes through the Paul Dunn State Forest, crosses the Luckiamute and Little Luckiamute rivers, and finally curves north to end at the town of Dallas, Oregon, on Rickreall Creek.

**Historical Assets:** Between Imlay and Vya, Nevada, this historic trail lies within the Black Rock Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area (NCA), which is managed by the BLM. Original trail trace and associated emigrant sites and graves, including many of those described individually below, are abundant throughout the NCA.

Approaching the Black Rock Desert from Imlay, after passing Rabbithole Springs, visitors can see the distinctive landmark of Black Rock looming above the desert floor to the west. At Willow Springs, now on private property but in view from public right-of-way, emigrants dipped water one cup at a time for themselves and for thirsty livestock. Original trail remnants exist in the vicinity. Near Big Antelope Spring, which also is on private land, lies the grave of Susan Coon, who died in childbirth there in 1860. From Antelope Pass, visitors can see the same expansive view that the emigrants experienced. Original trail trace exists at Kamma Pass, and a number of historic features, including structural ruins and possible graves, are located at Rabbithole Springs. Beyond Rabbithole is the Quinn River crossing, where a dry crust often hides deep, wheel-grasping mud. The trail next enters the Black Rock Desert and proceeds toward Black Rock, a looming basalt and limestone formation that is visible for many miles. At its foot lies Black Rock Springs, a complex of hot springs where emigrants found the first abundant water and grass since leaving the Humboldt River. Today the springs and surrounding area are used for camping, as they were historically.

The trail continues to Double Hot Springs, where the water is hot enough to boil food. Today the springs are part of a developed interpretive area used for recreation. Traces of wagon trail can be seen in the vicinity of the Mud Meadows Reservoir, which historically was an area of good water and grass. Fly Canyon “wagon slide” is a 30- to 35-degree, 70-foot descent, from which the trail continues to High Rock Lake. A short distance beyond the lake is High Rock Canyon, a narrow defile that is mentioned in numerous emigrant journals. After emerging from the upper canyon, the trail passes an unusual rock formation known as “Bruff’s Singular Rock,” named for a description and sketch by Forty-niner J. Goldsborough Bruff, who also sketched Rabbithole Springs, Fly Canyon, and other features along the trail. Beyond that landmark, the route crosses BLM’s Massacre Ranch, named for an apocryphal massacre that has never been confirmed.

Seyfeyth’s Hot Springs, where emigrants stopped to rest their livestock, is on public lands. Wild plums still grow at Plum Creek (Heath Creek), on private land. Deep trail swales are accessible to the public at Fandango Pass, and Goose Lake is visible from the nearby highway, although the springs and emigrant campsite areas are on private and XL Ranch Indian Reservation lands. Pothole Spring, originally known as Goff Spring, where Jesse Applegate left a note for the oncoming emigrants to tell them he had gone to seek help, still exists on private land. Bloody Point on Tule Lake, where several conflicts occurred between Modoc Indians and emigrants and militia, still exists, though not at the location shown on USGS topographic maps. A number of trails-era buildings still stand at Jacksonville, Oregon, where later emigrants on the Applegate Trail stopped to receive aid. Trail remnants are visible at Sexton Mountain summit. The Applegate Trail Interpretive Center and Museum in Sunny Valley on Grave Creek, which is named for the nearby burial place of a young emigrant woman, is located north of Grants Pass, Oregon. Ruts still ascend the hillside on the north side of the town of Myrtle Creek.

**Historical Summary:** In 1992, Congress designated the Applegate Trail as a component of the California National Historic Trail. Although the trail extends into Oregon and terminates at the south end of the Willamette Valley, Congress did not designate it as part of the Oregon NHT in 1978 because the original feasibility study team did not consider it to be a primary route of the Oregon Trail. However, some historians view the Applegate Trail as an important early emigrant route that played a prominent role in promoting settlement of the region and in accommodating the movement of traffic throughout the territory.

The Applegate Trail is actually a combination of several routes established by different parties for different reasons over the course of several decades. The north/south stretch through Oregon is the earliest part of the trail. Hudson’s Bay Company brigades in search of furs and trading opportunities established a pack route, probably following Indian footpaths, through Southern Oregon and northern California during the 1820s and 1830s. In the mid-1830s, Americans began driving livestock north along that trail from California into the Oregon Country, and by the 1840s, trade and exploration parties and livestock drovers were regularly using the route. A party of Oregon emigrants accompanied an American military detachment south along the Hudson’s Bay Company pack trail to resettle in California in 1841.

## ***Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes***

Two years later, another party of dissatisfied Oregonians, led by Lansford Hastings and Stephen Meek, whose names soon would be associated with disastrous attempts to open untested cutoffs into Oregon and California, followed that route to California. With the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill in 1848, much of the white male population of Oregon poured south along the trail to seek their fortunes in the California goldfields. By the early 1850s, the old Hudson's Bay Company pack trail, by this time known as the Oregon-California Trail and as the Old California Trail, had become an important regional route between Oregon's Willamette Valley and California's Central Valley (Helfrich 1976:1-5; Beckham 1996:23-37; Emerson 1996:8-13; Davis 2000:11-28).

As those events were unfolding, explorers blazed a second section of what would become the Applegate Trail. In 1843-1844, John C. Fremont led a topographical expedition west to Fort Vancouver and then south through Oregon along the eastern flank of the Cascade Mountains. His route jogged east past Lake Abert in Southern Oregon, turned south through High Rock Canyon, and crossed Nevada's Black Rock Desert to Pyramid Lake and the Truckee River before swinging west to Sutter's Fort in California.

Meanwhile, the combination of a family tragedy, international politics, and Oregon boosterism compelled the opening of a third section that would link the packers' trail with Fremont's route.

The tragedy was a rafting accident that drowned two children of the Applegate emigrant party in 1843. Upon reaching the Columbia River at the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Nez Percés (Walla Walla), emigrants of the early 1840s could continue west via a rough cow path along the river bank or they could float their families by raft or bateau through a frightening series of rapids to reach The Dalles. Jesse Applegate and his extended family decided to take their chances on the river. John Fremont, whose party was then working its way on horseback along the Columbia toward Vancouver, observed the sturdy Applegate rafts gliding merrily past on the current. Among the dangerous rapids above The Dalles, though, one of the rafts upset and spilled its passengers. The two young sons of brothers Jesse and Lindsay Applegate disappeared into the wild waters, never to be recovered. The grief-stricken fathers vowed they would find a safer route for the ongoing emigration. Their aim converged with the interests of economic boosters who wished to attract more emigrants to the south end of the Willamette Valley. Still other Oregonians desired a southern wagon route that would serve as an alternate trail into and out of the Pacific Northwest in the event of war with Great Britain, which controlled the western end of the established Oregon Trail (Helfrich 1971:1).

After several expeditions failed to locate a new route, a company of 15 settlers, including Jesse and Lindsay Applegate, Levi Scott, David Goff, and famed mountain man Moses "Black" Harris, formed to scout a southern wagon route into (or out of) Oregon (Bassett et al. 1998:49). In preparation, Jesse Applegate obtained Hudson's Bay Company maps and also evidently read Fremont's journal from his 1843-1844 topographical expedition through Oregon and Nevada (Helfrich 1971:2).

On June 25, 1846, this "South Road Company" departed from the vicinity of Dallas, Oregon, and followed rivers, trappers' trails, and Indian paths south between the Coast Range and the Cascade Mountains. Upon crossing the Calapooya Mountains, the party fell in with the old Hudson's Bay Company pack trail to California (Helfrich 1976:8). At the Rogue River, east of present-day Ashland, the company left the pack trail and explored a new route southeasterly through the Cascade Mountains, through the far northeastern corner of today's state of California, and into northwestern Nevada. This became the third segment that linked the trappers' trail and Fremont's trail. The company next followed Fremont's route through High Rock Canyon to Black Rock Springs in the Black Rock Desert, and from there made their way east to the existing California Trail on the Humboldt River.

Now the road finders had a route but not yet a trail: the men had not even marked the way they had come, let alone cleared trail for westbound wagons. They estimated that about 30 well-equipped men from the oncoming wagon trains would be needed to open a passable wagon trail along their new route (Bagley 2010:287-298; Niederheiser 2010:106-121).

Most of the exploratory company now eased slowly eastward along the California Trail, resting their worn out horses along the way, while Jesse Applegate and four other men rode ahead toward Fort Hall

to buy supplies. Along the way, one member of Applegate's advance party met up with family members on their way to the Willamette Valley, and so he peeled off to join them. A second member rode off alone and was never heard from again. At the junction of the California and Oregon trails at Raft River, the remaining two men riding with Applegate turned west down the Oregon Trail, hoping to catch up with the rear company, persuade them to turn around, and lead them back onto the new "Southern Route to Oregon." As Applegate continued alone to Fort Hall, he recruited passing wagon trains to try his new route. In an open letter to the emigrants, he promised a safer, much shorter way with plenty of grass and water.

The road finders came together again in mid-August at Thousand Springs Valley in northeastern Nevada, where they met up with wagon parties that had decided to follow the untested new route. Levi Scott and David Goff started west with the wagons; more emigrant companies, persuaded by Applegate's open letter, arrived later and fell in behind them. Ultimately, nearly 100 wagons and perhaps as many as 500 emigrants turned off onto the Southern Route (Bagley 2010; Helfrich 1971).<sup>60</sup> Of those, only 22 to 24 men, including most of the Applegate exploring party, formed a poorly equipped work crew and rode ahead to open the road for the wagons (Helfrich 1976:9; Niederheiser 2010:125).

The terrain along the route was very difficult and grass and water for the livestock were scarce across the deserts of northwest Nevada, northeastern California, and Southern Oregon. As the emigrants worked their way toward the Cascade Mountains, several of the original road-clearing crew dropped out for family or health reasons and a few others somehow became separated from the wagon train. In the vicinity of Clear Lake, just south of the Oregon-California border, Jesse Applegate and two companions split off from the crew to ride in advance and blaze the way, promising to send back help from the settlements. By the time the laborers reached the Cascade Mountains of Southern Oregon, only 14 men remained to do the hard work of marking and opening a road through the heavy forests and canyons ahead. Applegate reached his home in late September and remained there to assist his wife through a difficult pregnancy, and other members of the original road finding party soon rode in, as well. Moses Harris and others gathered provisions, including cattle from the Applegate brothers' herds, and headed back into the mountains to aid the emigrants (Helfrich 1976:9; Unruh 1979:294; Niederheiser 2010:126).

Meanwhile, with leadership and encouragement from Levi Scott, the fatigued pioneers pushed on. They clustered in small wagon parties strung out across 50 miles, which made them vulnerable to constant Indian harassment, and both emigrants and livestock suffered increasingly from hunger as provisions and forage ran low. On October 22 or 23, one of the relief parties from the settlements met the forward wagons with a few beef cattle, some flour, and the disheartening news that wagons would not be able to pass through rugged Umpqua Canyon (now called Canyon Creek Canyon), which lay about six miles ahead. Stunned by this information, the emigrants seemed to give up, and Levi Scott could persuade the forward parties to move only a couple miles a day toward the dreaded defile. The despairing emigrants halted at the foot of Umpqua Mountain, in the vicinity of today's community of Azalea, and refused to budge. Worried about the approaching rainy season, Scott implored them to help him open trail over Canyon Creek Pass and down through the gorge, and in disgust he threatened to quit and ride home if the emigrants could not summon the will to move. Finally, a few men of the party agreed to join Scott in opening what were arguably the most terrible 10 miles of wagon trail between the Missouri River and the Willamette Valley. Descending from the mountain pass, the route entered narrow, boulder-strewn Canyon Creek, where the work crew laboriously built ramps of logs and earth into help the wagons over obstructions in the streambed. The lead wagons started making their way up toward Canyon Creek Pass on Oct. 26. The next day, spattering raindrops tapped at the canvas wagon covers, heralding the onset of the Pacific Northwest winter monsoons. By the time the rear wagons started down the gorge under a steady rain in early November, Canyon Creek was running swift and high. The rushing waters washed out the earthen ramps and other improvements, and the force of the current and the slick rocks

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<sup>60</sup> One member of the party, Truman Powers, wrote that the company consisted of 400 to 500 men, women, and children (Bagley 2010: 299).

## Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes

underfoot caused oxen to fall and wagons to overturn. While the forward parties groaned through the canyon in five days, those in the rear struggled for 10 days or longer. The passage took heavy toll on oxen and wagons, and five emigrants died along the way (Helfrich 1976:28-29, 32; Emerson 1996:85-92; Niederheiser 2010:133-136). Everyone lost most of their possessions to Canyon Creek.

In November, Willamette settlers sent multiple relief parties to meet the lead wagons and conduct them into the valley. However, some of the fatigued and starving emigrants simply ground to a halt in Oregon's Umpqua River Valley. These people built a cabin or camped and hunted to feed themselves, or accepted homesteaders' offers of shelter and assistance through the winter. They resumed their journey to the valley in the spring; the last of the emigrants finally reached the settlements in April 1847 (Morgan 1993:787, fn 165).

Mudslinging began even as those events were still unfolding, with the *Oregon Spectator* publishing claims and counterclaims as to the whereabouts and condition of the emigrants and who was accountable for their troubles. Amid the barrage of public accusations and insults, one of the road finders, James Nesmith, challenged one of the emigrants, Judge Jesse Quinn Thornton, to a duel. When Thornton ignored the challenge, Nesmith distributed a handbill "To The World!!" in which he named Thornton a "reclaimless liar, an infamous scoundrel, a black hearted villain, an arrant coward, a worthless vagabond and an imported miscreant, a disgrace to the [legal] profession and a dishonor to his country" (Helfrich 1976:96; Hazelett 2015:197). In 1849, Thornton published a two-volume book in which he related his experience on the "Applegate Trail," grandly insulted Jesse Applegate and blamed him for the sufferings of the emigrants, and then accused Applegate of bilking the penniless pioneers once they reached the settlements. In self-defense, Applegate countercharged that the emigrants were lazy and had lingered along the way. Others readily pitched in on both sides of the fight. This exchange, which continues to some extent today, helped pin Applegate's name to the entire length of the Southern Route (Bassett et al. 1998:50; Niederheiser 2010:141-156; see also Hazelett 2015:196-219).

At the urging of Oregon's provisional government, Levi Scott returned the following year to improve the trail and to lead more emigrants (this time on an uneventful trip and in good time) from Fort Hall via the Applegate Trail/Southern Route to Oregon. In later years, part of the trail was used by Oregonians to travel back and forth between home and the California goldfields. For example, in 1848 Peter Burnett took 150 men with 50 wagons from Oregon City over the old Oregon-California/Applegate Trail and then continued south into California along a new route, which became known as the Burnett Cutoff. Along the way his party encountered a stranded party of gold-seekers who had been led by Peter Lassen into Northern California via the Applegate Trail. Burnett and Lassen together opened the Lassen Trail. Lindsay Applegate himself went to California that year and returned with a bag of gold dust worth \$6,000. In 1852, another party of Oregonians followed the Applegate Trail south from Oregon to blaze a new route, the Yreka Trail, to the California goldfields (Bassett et al. 1998:51).

The Applegate Trail in the early 1850s was dangerous, for travelers passed through the territories of some half-dozen western Indian tribes who fiercely resisted intrusion: the Modoc, Pit River, Northern Paiute, Shasta, Klamath, and Rogue River peoples (Silva, n.d.). Conflict between white parties and Modocs flared particularly in 1852 at a "point of rocks" that extended onto the Tule Lake lakebed, on the Applegate Trail about two miles south of the Oregon border and east of the Yreka turnoff.

An unconfirmed story of the massacre of an entire wagon train at that location still circulates, but several fights and many deaths there are well documented, earning the landmark the name of Bloody Point. Contemporaneous reports put the number of emigrants who died in conflict with the Modocs at Bloody Point at 50 to 60 (R. Silva, personal communication, 11/19/2012). In retaliation, white men murdered 41 Modocs during a peace parley (Beck and Hasse 1975). Western historian Will Bagley considers some of the reports of emigrant deaths to be exaggerated or duplicative, with two or more witnesses reporting the same events that subsequently were misunderstood to be separate attacks. He writes, however, that the contemporaneous written records "all agree that warfare between Indians and emigrants killed an extraordinary number of overland travelers, perhaps more than a dozen, and many, many more Modocs before the year ended" (Bagley 2012:375).



Oregon Trail historian Devere Helfrich (1971, 1976) researched written records of the Oregon emigration year by year over the Applegate Trail/Southern Route to Oregon, arriving at an estimated total of 1,605 emigrants on the trail between 1846 and 1859; however, Helfrich notes that information is lacking for some years. Another 50 or so emigrants that Helfrich did not report traveled the Applegate Trail to Oregon in 1859 (see the 1919 reminiscences of William Henry and Lavina Ann McCormick at <http://familytreemaker.genealogy.com/users/s/m/i/Peggy-J-Smith/GENE2-0001.html>). The combined total based on written record of the emigration comes to about 1,665 emigrants.

A query of OCTA's COED database was conducted to identify accounts of travel along the Applegate Trail/Southern Route to Oregon west of Goose Lake. This query identified 38 emigrant references for that location between 1846 and 1866. Using Mattes' ratio, this number places an estimated 9,500 emigrants on the route. Similarly, trails researcher Jerry Eichhorst reports 40 accounts of emigrants who followed all or most of the Raft River to the Applegate Trail route to the Applegate trailhead in Nevada and from there continued to Oregon. Using Mattes' ratio, Eichhorst's accounts puts the volume of travel on this route at 10,000. These are almost certainly overestimates of the traffic on the route.

**Conclusion:** In sum, researchers have solid documentation for use of the Raft River to the Applegate Trail route, and by extension the Applegate Trail itself, by approximately 2,000 westbound emigrants to Oregon, with most accounts dating to 1846–1847 and 1852–1853. Estimates of traffic volume based on Mattes' ratio of travelers per trail record, on the other hand, range narrowly between about 9,500 and 10,000 emigrants for the Applegate Trail. That range likely overestimates the volume of traffic on this route: since the emigrants' troubles on the Applegate Trail were widely publicized and mentioned in many reports and documents, the actual emigration numbers are well documented at around 2,000. The Applegate Trail/Southern Route to Oregon already has been determined eligible for the National Trails System and is designated as part of the California National Historic Trail, due use of the route to carry gold rush traffic into California from the east and from Oregon. It also was a conduit for emigrant traffic into and within Oregon, and the 1846 emigrants' sufferings along the route, along with the resulting and ongoing controversies, are part of the trail's compelling history. Along its length are numerous trail-related places of historic interest, particularly within the Black Rock Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area, which are considered premier destinations for trail visitors.

Designation of this route would add 825 miles to the Oregon National Historic Trail but no new miles to the National Trails System, as it is already designated California National Historic Trail.

**50a-c. Meek Cutoff.** The Meek Cutoff is under consideration for inclusion as a component of the Oregon National Historic Trail. The study route branches off the original Oregon Trail near Vale, Oregon. It meanders generally west across eastern Oregon; might or might not split into two variants between the GI Ranch, on South Fork of the Crooked River, and springs near Gateway, 10 miles north of Madras, Ore; and rejoins the primary route of the Oregon Trail at The Dalles on the Columbia River. As a single route between Vale and The Dalles, it is about 453.5 miles long (Hambleton's proposed route), but if both variants (the split) are included, the route is about 459 miles (Ragen's proposed route). As it continues north from Gateway and approaches The Dalles, the Meek Cutoff shares or closely approximates 27 miles of corridor with the existing Oregon National Historic Trail. The remaining miles (depending on variants selected) would be new to the National Trails System.

**Background:** The exact route and circumstances of the 1845 Meek Cutoff across eastern Oregon are matters of debate, with the split of the wagon train along two variants between GI Ranch and Gateway being a particular point of disagreement. The main competing viewpoints about the split are framed here first, followed by the proposed route descriptions, a list of historical assets, and a historical summary of the Meek Cutoff.

Researchers Keith Clark and Lowell Tiller compiled the first popular history of the route, *Terrible Trail: The Meek Cutoff, 1845*, which was published in 1966 and revised and reprinted in 1993. According to Clark and Tiller, the struggling, straggling wagon train divided at the South Fork of the Crooked River on

## ***Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes***

present-day GI Ranch, with one group of travelers continuing northwest down the river and a second group turning west toward Hampton Buttes. (These groups comprised loosely affiliated parties traveling in the same direction but not necessarily in coordination or under joint leadership.) The first group of emigrants continued working northwesterly along the Crooked and Ochoco drainages to reach the middle Deschutes River. Clark and Tiller traced the second group west around Hampton Buttes, thence northwesterly across Pringle Flats and down Bear Creek to Taylor Butte, and from there due west to Pilot Butte and the Deschutes River at present day Bend, Oregon. (Their alignment between Taylor Butte and Bend is shown in this study as the Free Emigrant Road study route.) There, they wrote, the emigrants turned northeasterly, crossed the Crooked River near Smith Rock (today a state park), and continued north. The two groups traveled separately for a total of 10 days before converging by chance at a waterhole near Gateway, Oregon, about 10 miles north of the larger community of Madras. From there, Clark and Tiller reported, the recombined wagon train traveled in a broad, northeasterly curve to the location where Sherar's Bridge later was built on the Deschutes River. All of the emigrants crossed the river there and continued north to The Dalles, generally following Indian trails and John C. Fremont's southbound exploratory route of 1843.

The two authors were not explicit about how they knew that "a split took place" among the 200 scattered wagons at the South Fork of the Crooked River (Clark and Tiller 1993:62). The idea of the split seems to have existed as a deeply rooted, widely accepted tradition, and so it may not have occurred to the researchers that it needed explanation. None of the 1845 trail diaries or journals they cited remarks on such a division. Instead, Clark and Tiller (1993:83-89) alluded to "local legend" about discoveries of wagon parts and other artifacts on the western route; oral traditions about the division, handed down through the emigrants' descendants; ruts, possible graves, and other features that the researchers themselves viewed along the western route in the 1960s; and an 1876 cadastral survey map noting "Meeks Old Emigrant Road" on the purported western route near Pringle Flat. In addition, Daniel Herren, who would have been about 21 years old as a member of the Meek wagon train, reportedly told interviewer Thomas Hunsacker in 1881 that the train "divided, one bunch taking to the right of the Perlina [now Maurey] mountains and coming out on Crooked river near where Prineville now stands; while one traveled west and struck the Deschutes [river] some miles above where Bend is located." The parties "all came together again before we reached The Dalles," he stated (Hunsacker 1919). Clark and Tiller (1993:89) quoted Herren's remark about coming together but omitted his earlier description of the division itself. Since the two researchers clearly were aware of the entire newspaper account, which Hunsacker had published 38 years after speaking with Herren, it likely bolstered their acceptance of the temporary split.

Clark and Tiller (1993:63) provided a very general sketch map of the two branches of the split, which they interpolated from the information at hand. They knew from emigrant accounts that approximately 200 wagons were on the trail. Two emigrants, one writing on Sept. 17 from the South Fork of the Crooked River at GI Ranch and the other writing Sept. 26 from a spring (which Clark and Tiller identified as Sagebrush Springs) near Gateway, Oregon, mentioned that 200 wagons—believed to be the entire company—were in camp at those places on those evenings. The journals did not say that the wagon train had either split or rejoined, but simply remarked on the number of wagons in the camps. Clark and Tiller, probably led by Herren's published statement about the division of the wagon train and by local traditions about the route, inferred that the groups traveled separately between those September dates. They then reconstructed the general route alignments between the two camps based on daily mileage estimates and notes recorded in emigrants' journals; on emigrant letters and reminiscences written many decades after the events of 1845; on local lore, observations, and recollections of 20th century residents who lived and worked in the region; and on topography, water sources, and historic features (including wagon trace) across the landscape. That is accepted methodology, also used by researchers trying to identify the alignments of other wagon routes considered in this feasibility study.

Among the physical evidence noted by Clark and Tiller along the western route was a dead juniper, located south of the unincorporated community of Alfalfa, that had been inscribed with the words "Sacred to the memory of JE—IE." (Two middle letters of the name and perhaps some additional words

were illegible.) Nearby was a grave-like feature that they thought might be the burial place of an emigrant child (Clark and Tiller 1993:85). The limb was removed in order to preserve it and the inscription tree itself reportedly burned in a range fire decades ago, but today the grave feature boasts a permanent rock and concrete border and a headstone.

Clark and Tiller (1993:84 fn 82) also cited a brief item from the March 26, 1916, *Sunday Oregonian*, in which a pair of prospectors reported finding a grave “in the Prineville country” that had a headstone with the inscription, “Mary E. --- 1849.” Clark and Tiller (1993:196-197) speculated that it might actually be the burial place of an emigrant child, Eliza Harris, who had died along the Meek Cutoff in 1845.<sup>61</sup> Although they did not name the location of this grave (and might not have known), the authors placed the footnote about the newspaper item in their discussion of the route around Taylor Peak (located south of Prineville Reservoir), which implies that they thought it was along that stretch of the western route of the Meek Cutoff. Another piece of evidence noted by the two researchers was a juniper crudely inscribed with the words “1845 JOST MEEKS” along with a symbol that they interpreted as a surveyor’s arrow, pointing in the direction of travel. This tree, which they photographed, stood about five miles north of their route on its approach to Bend. Because it was not on the trail, Clark and Tiller (1993:86) suggested that it might have been carved by a member of a Meek company scouting party or by one of the other emigrants as the wagon party headed northeasterly from Bend toward the Crooked River at Smith Rock.

In addition to these lines of evidence, the authors probed the rumors of gold allegedly discovered by members of the Meek wagon train. According to lore, somewhere along the trail one or more of the emigrants (the Herren name is prominent among these accounts) picked up some gold nuggets from a ravine, or a laundry tub, or a cow track, and carried them back to camp in a blue bucket, or left a blue bucket at the discovery site, or declared that they could have filled a blue bucket with the gold they saw lying about, or somehow did something that involved gold and a blue bucket. Stories about the purported find—nearly all handed-down family traditions—vary wildly in detail, but most agree that the nuggets somehow were lost along the trail, or sent to California for assay, or cashed in, or given to children as playthings, or used as a doorstop, or fashioned into personal adornments. Unfortunately, no one could produce the gold in question and none of the supposed witnesses could remember quite when or where the nuggets had been discovered. Beginning in the 1850s, though, treasure hunters, including members of the Meek wagon train, would pursue the legend of the Lost Blue Bucket Gold Diggings across the deserts of eastern Oregon and lead others, possibly for pay, in the same search. Based on their reading of emigrant journals and reminiscences, Clark and Tiller deduced that the discovery probably would have occurred between Wagontire Mountain and Hampton Butte, either shortly before or immediately after (they believed) the wagon train divided.

*Terrible Trail* quickly became the undisputed, standard history for the Meek Cutoff, and Clark and Tiller’s account of the split route stood unchallenged for years. In 1976, however, author and historian Donna Wojcik proposed a different alignment of the western branch of the Meek Cutoff. Whereas *Terrible Trail* sent the route directly west from Taylor Butte to meet the Deschutes River at Bend, Wojcik’s *The Brazen Overlanders of 1845* had the emigrants turn northwest at the “Sacred to the Memory

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<sup>61</sup> The news item, “Blue Bucket Mine is Believed Found,” was published on the front page of the *Sunday Oregonian*. In addition to the gravestone noted by Clark and Tiller, the paper reported that the prospectors also found a crude cabin, sluice boxes, a frying pan, and an old pick at the site, which led the gold-seekers to think someone had discovered the fabled Blue Bucket diggings and worked the site back in 1849. Clark and Tiller essentially changed the name of the deceased emigrant girl from Eliza to Mary, linked her surname to the mysterious “Mary E.,” switched the date on the gravestone from 1849 to 1845, and inexplicably overlooked the historical context in which the grave was discovered. Today the 1845 “Mary E. Harris grave” is widely accepted as fact among trail aficionados and researchers, and it is thought to be one of two curious piles of stone found at Hampton Butte, about six miles east of Taylor Butte.

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of JE—IE” inscription near Alfalfa.<sup>62</sup> They then drove through “the exact area” where the “1845 JOST MEEKS” juniper stood (Wojcik 1976:287), and eventually meet the Deschutes at Cline Falls west of Redmond, Oregon. From there, she surmised, the emigrants followed the Deschutes River north for several miles, crossed a low divide, and “brought their wagons to an abrupt halt on the rim of Crooked river gorge” (Wojcik 1976:289). They followed the escarpment east a few miles to cross the Crooked River near Smith Rock and continued to Sagebrush Springs, where they encountered the wagon parties who had taken the northern route. Both Clark and Tiller and Wojcik could point to historical documentation and physical evidence in support of their respective conclusions about the alignment.<sup>63</sup>

More recently, other researchers have begun reexamining Meek Cutoff history using modern tools and methodologies. These researchers concur that the more northerly branch of the split, which continued down the South Fork of the Crooked River, is part of the Meek Cutoff, although they vary, sometimes widely, on the particulars of the route. Once again, the western branch is the primary point of argument: some researchers maintain that Meek’s wagon train never divided for 10 days, that all of the emigrants at GI Ranch followed the river in a northerly direction, and that there was no western variant in 1845; but others are equally convinced that the train did divide at the South Fork, with some of the 1845 emigrants opening the western branch generally as described by Wojcik. Both sides of the controversy cite the same historical documentation in support of their conclusions.

Traces of wagon use along the western alignment do exist but are not necessarily proof of the split. Wheel ruts, ox and mule shoes, artifact scatters, and other features may have been left behind by the 1845 Meek Cutoff emigrants, by later treasure hunters scrambling to locate the Lost Blue Bucket Gold, or by other men generally exploring, freighting, prospecting, mining, surveying, and ranching in eastern Oregon from the 1850s through the early 20th century. In particular, wagon trace, graves, and other features along the western route could have been created by the 1853 Elijah Elliott and 1854 William Macy wagon trains as they turned off the Meek Cutoff to join the Free Emigrant Road.

Consequently, the Meek Cutoff split controversy also affects the Free Emigrant Road feasibility study route. Did Elliott’s 1853 train follow 1845 wagon tracks along the western branch all the way to the Deschutes River and split off there to reach the Free Emigrant Road? Or did Elliott’s wagon train leave the Meek Cutoff at the South Fork of the Crooked River (or perhaps Lost Hollow Sinks), veer west into an untracked desert, and itself open the western route? Journals from Elliott’s and Macy’s companies offer few clues toward solving the riddle. Clark and Tiller (1993:24) themselves noted that “the hardships of the 1853 emigrants were quite similar to those of the 1845 people. In fact, the story of each train is so similar that the legends and stories written about them are badly confused. Even their trails have been confused.”

Two teams of researchers today are trying to resolve that confusion, but perhaps not surprisingly, they have arrived at different conclusions.

Over several weeks each summer between 2006 and 2008, businessman, lawyer, and trail aficionado Brooks Ragen fielded a team of specialists in history, geology, global positioning, metal detecting, and aerial photography to retrace and document the Meek Cutoff. Several team members previously had lived, worked, and recreated in the area and were very familiar with the territory and with Meek Cutoff history. Some of them previously had been involved in extensively researching and preparing museum exhibits about the Meek Cutoff. Ragen followed up his groundwork with helicopter over-flights in 2009

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<sup>62</sup> Donna Wojcik (1976:285-287) writes that one or perhaps two emigrants were buried near the “JE—IE” juniper. She speculates one of those graves might be that of Elisa Harris, the same emigrant girl that Clark and Tiller called Mary/Eliza Harris, whom they thought to have died in the vicinity of Taylor Butte.

<sup>63</sup> A disagreement over the two routes is chronicled in a series of letters and enclosures sent by a researcher affiliated with the Deschutes County Historical Society to the BLM at Prineville between July 23 and Sept. 30, 1992. Copies of the letters were obtained by Evans-Hatch, a consulting firm that researched the Meek Cutoff for the NPS in 2000-2004, and are on file with the National Trails Intermountain Region office of the National Park Service.

and 2010. In tracing the trail, he and his team consulted numerous emigrant diaries, reminiscences, letters, interviews, and other historical sources; Clark and Tiller's *Terrible Trail*, Donna Wojcik's *The Brazen Overlanders of 1845*, and other secondary sources; Maptech, US Geological Survey, US Forest Service, and BLM maps; and many local ranchers who work and reside along the trail route. Ragen's team also leaned heavily on the records of Delmar Hinshaw, who had spent decades researching, physically retracing, and mapping the Meek Cutoff until his death in 1997. Hinshaw, a descendant of an 1845 Meek Cutoff emigrant, had assisted Clark and Tiller in their efforts to retrace the trail but evidently favored Wojcik's take on the western alignment.

Ragen's interdisciplinary team affirms the divided route (with the western branch generally as proposed by Wojcik and Hinshaw), citing to their own field discoveries as supporting evidence. Along the western branch of the split, the team found wagon ruts over Milliron Hill; four features that appear to be emigrant gravesites (including the "Sacred to JE\_IE" graves and two rock features at Alkali Butte where "Mary Harris" is thought to be buried); and two or three drag logs (used to restrain wagons on a steep descent) in association with possible trail trace at Crockery Rim, where wagons are believed to have descended into Bear Creek. Team members also concur with Wojcik that the "1845 JOST MEEKS" juniper limb, now in a museum, was originally located near the western route alignment, and they cite numerous local memories of wheel ruts, emigrant artifacts, and abandoned wagons encountered in years past. Most of the ground today, though, bears no visible evidence of wagon passage, leaving the investigators to extrapolate the probable wagon route based largely on these clues, the locations of water sources, topographical constraints, emigrant reminiscences, and journal notes and "roadometer" mileages.<sup>64</sup>

Curious about the legend of the Lost Blue Bucket Gold, Ragen's team narrowed the probable location of the discovery (if it occurred) to the vicinity of Alkali Butte, on the western variant of the split. With the help of an experienced prospector, the group "spent the better part of two days searching there" (Ragen 2013:138). Their efforts, like those of so many before them, were unsuccessful: the lost Blue Bucket treasure remains lost.

In 2013, Ragen released his findings in *The Meek Cutoff: Tracing the Oregon Trail's Lost Wagon Train of 1845*, a peer-reviewed book published through University of Washington Press. In this beautifully illustrated, day-by-day retracement account, he maps and describes the Meek Cutoff between Vale, Oregon, and its variant approaches to the Deschutes River. For feasibility study purposes, Ragen's proposed route from Cline Falls on the Deschutes River and north to The Dalles is represented by Del Hinshaw's original maps.

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<sup>64</sup> The wagon odometer, a set of wooden gears that counted turns of a wagon wheel of known circumference, did exist at the time and occasionally was used on the overland trails, perhaps most famously by Brigham Young's Mormon pioneer party on its way to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake in 1847. However, odometers typically were employed by travelers who were mapping or writing trail guides, as Young's party was doing for the oncoming Mormon emigration—and Young's chronicler noted frequent breakdowns and maintenance issues with his "roadometer." For most emigrants, these devices would have been an extra expense, added weight, a maintenance headache, and a drag on the wagons that they did not need or desire. By 1845, the primary route of the Oregon Trail was well established and reported, and besides, these emigrants had hired an experienced guide, Stephen Meek, to conduct them across the plains. They had no need of odometers, and the National Park Service is aware of no evidence that any wagons on the 1845 Meek Cutoff carried such devices. In fact, some of the journal mileages were recorded by men who did not drive wagons at all, but instead rode horseback while herding cattle. Emigrants were accustomed to estimating their mileages based on the number of hours they spent in the saddle or walked steadily with their oxen each day. For those driving oxen, two miles per hour was the rule of thumb, according to Clark and Tiller (1993:xvi). The National Park Service planning team concludes that inconsistencies in the daily mileages recorded in the Meek Cutoff journals are largely due to differences in judgment and slight variations in route rather than to slippages of wagon odometer gears caused by crossing rough terrain, as Ragen speculates.

## Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes

A different understanding of the Meek Cutoff is offered by James Hambleton, a professional land surveyor with 50 years of experience in cadastral surveying and road surveying. He has special expertise in locating cadastral survey corners that were set between 1864 and 1890. Hambleton notes that those corners often “were set making reference to some historic trail or road; therefore this type of work has required me to find and identify many historic trails and roads such as the Meek Cutoff of 1845” (J. Hambleton, personal communication, 5/19/2014). Since 2005, he and his wife, Theona Hambleton, have researched, located, and walked nearly all of the Meek Cutoff. They traced the trail using USGS quadrangle maps, satellite imagery, BLM cadastral survey field notes and maps, and the same emigrant diaries referenced by Ragen’s team (although Hambleton dismisses the pioneer reminiscences of later decades, stories handed down from generation to generation, and Lost Blue Bucket tales as unreliable). Hambleton, too, studied the works of Hinshaw, Clark and Tiller, Wojcik, and the other primary and secondary sources cited by Ragen, and in addition he had the benefit of reading Ragen’s published methodology and conclusions. While preparing his complete written analysis for publication, James Hambleton in 2014 provided a 19-page letter report summarizing some key points for National Park Service consideration. The summary did not describe any of the physical trail remnants that the Hambletons encountered in the field. Rather, it examined the methodologies, assumptions, reasoning, and evidence mustered by previous researchers in support of the split, and outlined his reasons for concluding that all of the 1845 emigrants traveled the northern route. Their book, *Wood, Water & Grass: Meek Cutoff of 1845* (Hambleton and Hambleton 2014), was published as this feasibility study analysis was well underway. In addition to the arguments posted in the earlier letter report to the National Park Service, the publication covers the route and the authors’ field observations, photographs, and detailed maps. Some of Hambleton’s points from the book and letter report are highlighted here.

First, he argues that the routine journal entries noting about 200 wagons in camp on Sept. 17 and Sept. 26 do not demonstrate that the groups traveled by separate routes between those dates, but are consistent with wagons strung out along the same, single route within that timeframe. Moreover, none of the 1845 journals and diaries mentions a division of the wagon train.<sup>65</sup>

Second, Hambleton points to a letter written by Solomon Tetherow, who is believed by the pro-split researchers to have taken the western variant. In the letter, published in the *Oregon Spectator* on March 18, 1847, Tetherow denied another correspondent’s claim that a group of Indians had met the Meek wagons on their northerly course (while all were still together, several days’ travel beyond Harney Lake) and directed them to turn west, whereby they would reach Jason Lee’s Methodist mission in Salem (Willamette Valley) within five days. Rather, Tetherow stated, a lone Indian man pointed out the direction to “Mr. Perkins’s house” at The Dalles (to the north), and “at my [Tetherow’s] request he was employed by Mr. Meek to pilot us to crooked River, which he did for a blanket” (Tetherow 1847).

Tetherow’s letter implies that he was with Meek and the Indian guide when the blanket was given at the Crooked River, some 30 miles and two days’ travel north of the big springs at GI Ranch on the South Fork. This is corroborated, Hambleton says, by Eli Cooley’s diary entries describing the route taken by Cooley’s and Tetherow’s wagons after Sept. 17, when the split purportedly occurred. Hambleton finds the historical evidence conclusive: both Tetherow and Cooley were with Stephen Meek on the northern route at the Crooked River on Sept. 19, two days after leaving the GI Ranch on the South Fork of the Crooked River.

In order for Tetherow and Cooley then to travel the western route from the GI Ranch, Hambleton reasons, they would have had to turn their wagons around, climb the steep ridge they had just

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<sup>65</sup> Asked how he might account for Dan Herren’s recollection of the divided wagon train, Hambleton said he did not know, but he observed that the train had, in fact, briefly divided and rejoined earlier on the trail, and he suggested that Herren many years later might have misremembered the exact circumstances of the split. He noted that there are also conflicting accounts about the supposed Blue Bucket Gold discovery (and one member of the Meek wagon train, Sol Durbin, flatly denied that any such discovery had ever occurred), illustrating that memory is highly malleable (J. Hambleton, personal communication, 5/16/2014).

descended to reach the Crooked River, and drive 30 miles back to the springs at the South Fork. Then to make up the lost time and meet the northwestern group at Gateway <sup>66</sup> on Sept. 26, he calculates, those wagons on the western variant would have needed to average about 23 miles per day. “This rate of travel would be over twice their average rate of travel for the past 1500 miles of their entire journey to this point....Simple logic leads me to believe such an effort would be nothing short of impossible,” Hambleton (2014) writes.

Third, he believes that notation of “Meeks Old Emigrant Road” on Alonzo Gesner’s 1876 survey map, which was cited by Clark and Tiller, was a one-time, localized aberration, likely attributable to a particular settler who lived at Pringle Flat at the time and probably knew and talked with Gesner when he was in the area. That “Meeks” notation, Hambleton points out, does not show up on any other 19th century survey maps of the area produced by Gesner or by others, although it appears on the 1876 Gesner map seven times along a stretch of road within three miles of that settler’s home at Pringle Flat. (Other surveyors also adopted local names for roads through that area, Hambleton notes [J. Hambleton, personal communication, 10/6/2012].) Continuing from that stretch, as shown on additional cadastral surveyors’ field notes and maps, was another 40-mile trail road segment that the surveyors labeled as the “Macy Emigrant Road” and “Macy Wagon Road,” among other names. Those notations link the route to the 1854 Macy Wagon train “and possibly the Elliott Wagon Train of the previous year” (Hambleton 2014).

Fourth, based on his analysis of the “SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF JE—IE” photograph published by Clark and Tiller (as the tree itself could not be located), Hambleton identifies the inscription as the product of a professional surveyor’s timber scribe, and not carved by an emigrant’s knife. He notes that the tree was located near a section line that was surveyed in 1879, and he suggests that it is “highly likely that the...survey party of 1879 was greatly involved with the scribing of this Juniper tree.” The “1845 Lost Meeks” inscription, on the other hand, was clumsily carved into dead, weathered wood using a large knife. From examination of the weathering of the cuts, he believes that this carving was probably made in the early to mid-20th century—many years after the “SACRED” inscription.

Fifth, Hambleton compares daily entries by two 1845 diarists, Eli Cooley and Jesse Harritt, who are supposed to have traveled separately on the western and northern branches, respectively. Their mileages and descriptions of the terrain and evening camp locales are closely similar and well aligned with water sources along the northern variant, indicating that they “did in fact follow the same route along the Crooked River.” There was, Hambleton concludes, “NO SPLIT in Meek Wagon Train” (Hambleton and Hambleton 2014:174).

In response to Hambleton’s arguments as presented above, Ragen and team members Bob Boyd (a trails researcher, teacher, and formerly Western history curator for the High Desert Museum near Bend, Oregon) and Steve Lent (formerly with the Ochoco National Forest and BLM, and currently assistant director of the A.R. Bowman Memorial Museum in Prineville) reiterate and stand by their conclusions.<sup>67</sup> They observe that their work builds upon a substantial body of work conducted by earlier researchers and they offer rebuttals to each of Hambleton’s arguments, objecting, in particular, to Hambleton’s

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<sup>66</sup> Hambleton identifies the Sept. 26 encampment near Gateway as Porter Springs rather than Sagebrush Springs. “Porter Springs,” he writes, “is located at the northerly edge of the community of Gateway, Oregon. Sagebrush Springs is about a mile and a half to the southeast of Porter Springs and located on Sagebrush Creek. Porter Springs is located directly on a historic Indian trail from the Trout Creek area to the agency Plains [and] was used as a main campsite while Indians gathered Camas root for their winter’s food supply” (J. Hambleton, personal communication, 7/22/2014). He identified the location based on information provided in the 1845 diary of Eli Cooley (Cooley and Cooley 2004), which had not been available to Clark and Tiller. (Cooley’s party traveled with that of Tetherow, which Clark and Tiller believed took the western variant of the split.)

<sup>67</sup> Ragen’s team had not had opportunity to review Hambleton’s book at the time they responded to an earlier draft of the NPS study route description and background.

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

decision to disregard much later remembrances and interviews (B. Ragen, personal communication, 09/30/2014, including correspondence to Ragen from Boyd dated 09/27/2014; S. Lent, personal communication addressed to B. Ragen dated 08/28/2014 and forwarded by Lent to the National Park Service on 10/09/2014).

**Route Description:** Between Vale and GI Ranch, Ragen's and Hambleton's alignments cross and interweave but seldom diverge by more than a few miles, and in places they are almost coincident. However, from GI Ranch to The Dalles (which is about half the length of the Meek Cutoff) the alignments are significantly different and often run three to 12 miles apart. The two researchers' routes, beginning at Vale, are described separately below.

- a. **Hambleton Route.** This route is 453.5 miles long. From Vale, Oregon, Hambleton's proposed route goes directly west and then follows the Malheur River southwest through Malheur Canyon to Little Valley. From the narrows between Little Valley and Harper Valley, emigrants could see the prominent landmark of Castle Rock looming some 35 miles in the distance. The route continues through Harper Valley toward Castle Rock, crossing Hart Creek and then turning north toward Cottonwood Creek. (At this point on Cottonwood Creek, Hambleton's route is about a mile south of Ragen's route.) In order to skirt the impassable gorge at the junction of Cottonwood Creek with Little Black Canyon, this route next climbs into the bluffs to the north and parallels the drainage for several miles before dropping back down to the creek. It continues southwesterly along Cottonwood Creek for about five miles until meeting another obstruction. There the route turns southwest and takes to the ridge tops just north of Jones Canyon, passing Jones Reservoir. Along the next four and a half miles, Hambleton notes, the emigrants encountered patches of the sharp-cornered rocks that injured the feet of their oxen. (This stretch is about three miles south of Ragen's route around Westfall Butte, where he observed fields of sharp volcanic rocks.)

The route next turns northwesterly toward Ketsay Butte (on some maps, Kelsay Butte). It turns west, passing just south of the butte, and continues to a spring at the headwaters of North Fork of Warm Springs Creek. From there it goes north along Lake Ridge to Morton Spring. (For the next 14 miles or so, Hambleton's route and Ragen's route largely coincide.) The route turns west into Agency Valley, passes along the north shore of today's Beulah Reservoir, and heads continues northwesterly up the North Fork of the Malheur River. Along this stretch of river, Ragen's route turns abruptly north and climbs around Castle Butte. Hambleton's route, on the other hand, enters the nearby bluffs north of the river and parallels the stream for about three miles. It then drops back down, crosses the North Fork of the Malheur River, and continues west for about four miles to a second Cottonwood Creek. There his route turns sharply south to Drewsey Valley, running one to two miles west of Ragen's route along the creek.

Hambleton's route next crosses the Middle Fork of the Malheur River and continues southwesterly across the Stinkingwater Mountains, crossing Sagebrush Flat and Gravel Ridge before emerging into Harney Valley. The route jogs west along today's alignment of highway US 20 for about three miles and then angles very gradually southwest, crossing two parcels of the Burns Paiute Indian Reservation. His route then turns more sharply southwest, crosses OR-78, crosses the East and West Forks of the Silvies River, and passes close to Wright's Point, a highly visible landmark in Harney Valley.

From there, the route continues southwest through Sunset Valley to reach the narrows (called Mud Lake) between Malheur Lake and Harney Lake. Turning due west, it next follows the north edge of Harney Lake/Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. About three miles south of Silver Lake, the route splits into two variants. (Here Hambleton's route is about three miles south of Ragen's route near Silver Lake.) One variant heads due west across Iron Mountain Flat, crosses Big Stick Creek, and continues to Alec Butte. The second variant heads southwest to skirt the north foot of Iron Mountain, another prominent landmark. It dips southwest and then turns northwest to meet the first variant two miles southeast of Alec Butte. The recombined route swings around



the south side of Alec Butte, where it meets Ragen's alignment, and crosses US 395. It next traverses a low saddle on the Egli Range complex and parallels Egli Ridge past Egli Springs. Now the two researchers' routes again diverge: where Ragen's route continues due west over the north flank of Wagontire Mountain to Lost Creek, Hambleton's turns northwest to cross a saddle between Wagontire and Sheep Mountains. Just beyond that pass, his route arrives at Lost Hollow, an 80-acre meadow with a spring-fed creek that flows about 400 gallons per minute (J. Hambleton, personal communication, 9/30/2012). In this vicinity, which is several miles north of Ragen's Lost Hollow campsite where the possible king bolt was found, Hambleton believes the emigrants gathered and waited for several days as scouts rode in search of the next water source.

His route next turns down Lost Creek to Lost Creek Sinks and then heads north between Big and Little Glass Buttes (as does Ragen's route). It crosses US 20 once more and continues north across Misery Flat to the large springs at the head the South Fork of the Crooked River, where the GI Ranch headquarters are located today.

In Hambleton's view of events, the Meek wagon train did not split up there. Instead, their single route follows the river north for about five miles and then climbs over a pass between Gerry Mountain and Steens Ridge. (Ragen's route, in contrast, goes directly over Steens Ridge.) The emigrants next made a harrowing descent to Camp Creek, where wagon ruts can still be seen today. Their route briefly follows Camp Creek, then turns northwest to Grassy Butte. Hambleton's route briefly splits around Cemetery Canyon: one variant loops west to Maury Creek and then follows the creek north to the Crooked River, while the other variant goes north down a steep ridge to the Crooked River. From there, Hambleton's route and Ragen's north alternate turn west down the Crooked River to the mouth of Horse Heaven Creek.

But whereas Ragen and Hinshaw's route, as described below, swings north past Pilot Butte to the Ochoco River, Hambleton believes the emigrants continued west down the Crooked River and along today's Prineville Reservoir, which submerges nine miles of his route. At the west end of the reservoir, Hambleton's proposed route meets the alignment of OR-27 (Crooked River Highway), where the river canyon begins a broad, sinuous turn to the northwest. Although the modern highway follows the river canyon, in 1845 the gorge was impassable to wagons, forcing the emigrants to leave the river and cut directly north for 13 miles, passing east of Stearns Butte, to present-day Prineville. From there, his route shares a corridor with US 26, angling northwest across Prineville Valley to the Crooked River National Grasslands and Rimrock Springs. Four emigrants of the Meek wagon train died at the springs; 18 more would die of an unknown cause over the next 10 days.

This study route leaves the highway at Rimrock Springs and follows Willow Creek north through Madras, Oregon. Three miles beyond Madras, the route leaves the creek, turns northeast across the Agency Plains, and descends to Porter Springs, located at the north edge of Gateway. (Porter Springs is a couple miles northwest of Sagebrush Springs, where the pro-split researchers believe the groups rejoined.) From there, Hambleton's route wends northeasterly through Trout Creek Ranch, skirts the east end of the rugged Tenmile Creek drainages, and intercepts US 197 at Shaniko Junction. It follows the highway alignment north over Criterion Summit and then leaves the highway, turning north to follow Trail Hollow Creek. Continuing north, it crosses Bakeoven Creek and follows Buck Hollow Ridge to enter Deschutes River State Recreation Area. The route turns sharply west, descends steep bluffs to reach the Deschutes River, and crosses above Sherars Falls. The route continues west along the alignment of OR-216 for three miles to reach the White River, and follows the north bank of the river for three miles before heading north across Tygh Valley and up Tygh Ridge. Following ancient Indian paths and the 1843 route of explorer John C. Fremont, it continues north along Mays Canyon Creek, passes through today's community of Dufur, and turns northwest across Fivemile and Threemile creeks. Finally, it turns north to The Dalles, where the route joins the primary route of the Oregon Trail.

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

- b. Ragen proposed route.** This route is 459 miles long. From Vale, Oregon, Ragen tracks several individual wagon parties traveling independently along somewhat different routes. Two primary branches diverge from Vale, with one going due west for about nine miles while the other dips southwest through today's community of Hope. The two variants converge on West Bench, only to split again a mile farther west. Here, one variant curves southwesterly over Vines Hill while the other generally follows the Malheur River through Malheur Canyon and Little Valley. These two variants converge at the south end of Little Canyon and the route continues southwest to the vicinity of today's community of Harper. From there the route turns northwest toward Westfall, Oregon, and then continues a couple miles up Bully Creek, along the west edge of Richie Flat. It turns southwest and follows Swamp Creek, and then passes around the south side of Westfall Butte before turning north along the west side of Bendire Ridge. Along this stretch, he reports, the emigrants found the ground for several miles to be littered with sharp volcanic rocks that hurt the feet of the draft animals.

From Bendire Ridge, Ragen's route begins a series of southwesterly jogs to the northeastern shore of Beulah Reservoir. Then turning northwest, the emigrants soon reached the North Fork of the Malheur River and started up the valley. Here they learned that "an impassable gorge blocked the river route" (Ragen 2013:63), so they turned north up "Meeks Gulch" (so named by later, local residents) in order to skirt the obstruction. Near this turning point the emigrants buried Sarah Chambers, who died from undocumented causes. Today her grave is fenced and marked with a concrete headstone and a historical plaque, "the only marked and named gravesite on the entire trail from Vale to the Deschutes river" (Ragen 2013:75). The emigrants next worked their way around Castle Rock, then descended Horse Flat and crossed to the south side of the North Fork of the Malheur River. There, Ragen's team of investigators discovered a rock feature that strongly appears to be another grave.

Curving southwest from the river, Ragen's route reaches Cottonwood Creek and turns south along the drainage to Drewsey Valley. (On the east side of the valley, Ragen notes, local tradition relates that a chest and other emigrant belongings were found along the trail years ago.) The route then winds southwesterly across Drewsey Valley, passing north of today's community of Drewsey. Near the toe of Drewsey Table, it crosses the Malheur River and continues southwesterly over the Stinkingwater Mountains and across the alignment of County Road 310/Pine Creek Road. Continuing west another six miles, the route reaches the toe of Elephant Butte, turns south for about nine miles, and emerges into Harney Valley.

Now Ragen tracks two emigrant groups that took slightly different routes. One variant crosses the alignment of US 20 and immediately turns west, paralleling the south side of the highway for about 10 miles. On that stretch, the route runs north of the Burns Paiute Indian Reservation. Approaching today's Burns Municipal Airport, the route curves sharply south to cross Poison Creek and OR-78. It crosses the East Fork of the Silvies River and arrives at the West Fork of the Silvies River, where it meets the second trail variant.

The second variant entering Harney Valley crosses US 20 and continues southwest across the valley, crossing two parcels of the Burns Paiute Indian Reservation, OR-78, and the East Fork of the Silvies River. There it turns south and meets the first variant at the West Fork of the Silvies River.

Now the combined route crosses the West Fork and angles southwest across Sunset Valley to the north shore of Harney Lake. It continues west along the edge of Harney Lake/Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, passes south of Stinking Lake, and crosses the alkali flats immediately south of Silver Lake. The route next passes between Capehart Lake and Lake on the Trail, then jogs around the south side of Alec Butte. From there it goes over Egli Ridge to Egli Spring, at the foot of Wagontire Mountain. Some emigrants camped at Egli Spring over several nights, but most continued west over the north flank of Wagontire Mountain to Lost Creek. According to Ragen (2013:105), Del Hinshaw had mapped this location as the Lost Hollow campsite where

the emigrants gathered and waited for their scouts to find the next source of water. Here, Ragen's team found an artifact they tentatively identified as the "king bolt" that connects a wagon box with the front axle.

When Meek brought word of a possible spring 30 miles ahead, the wagons rolled north down Lost Creek, past the Sinks of Lost Creek, and crossed the gap between Glass Butte and Little Glass Butte. Ragen's alignment then recrosses US 20 and continues north across Misery Flats to the springs of the GI Ranch on the South Fork of the Crooked River. According to Ragen and other researchers, here the lead wagon parties of the train divided, taking different routes to the Deschutes River.

- i. **Northern Branch.** Both Ragen and Hambleton agree that some or all of the emigrants went this way, but they differ on the particulars. Ragen's version of the northern route continues up the South Fork of the Crooked River for about five miles, jogs west into Sand Hollow, and then goes north over Steens Ridge, where his team found evidence of a wagon descent. His route continues north down Camp Creek and then jogs northeast over the end of the Maury Mountains before jogging southwest into the bluffs. The route crosses Hawley Ridge and Morgan Gulch before descending a steep ridge to the Crooked River. For the next 17 miles, Ragen traces the emigrants west down the river, approximating Hambleton's proposed route along this stretch. West of Polk Butte at the confluence of Pine Creek and the Crooked River, Ragen's fieldwork ends and his route thereafter follows the Meek Cutoff maps plotted years earlier by Del Hinshaw (A. McEldowney, personal communication, 5/18/2014). Hinshaw's version of the north branch continues down the river past the community of Post, swings north past Pilot Butte and then follows Veazie Creek northwest to the Ochoco Creek. The route follows that stream west through Ochoco Reservoir and Prineville. There, Hinshaw's route rejoins the Crooked River and follows that watercourse west to Lone Pine Creek. It turns north up the creek and passes Pine Ridge, then follows the alignment of US 26 north to meet the western branch about two miles south of Madras.
- ii. **Western Branch.** From GI Ranch, this branch of Ragen's proposed route heads west between Gerry Mountain and Hampton Buttes. At today's Pringle Flat Reservoir, the route begins winding northwesterly across Bear Creek and curls around the north side of Sugarloaf Butte. Now heading west, it flanks Milliron Hill to meet Little Bear Creek. From there, one wagon party followed the creek downstream, west, to its confluence with Bear Creek at Emigrant Basin, and then continued north along Bear Creek to Taylor Butte, south of Prineville Reservoir. Another party struck northeasterly toward Sheep Rock, then turned north and drove up the bluffs to the foot of Alkali Butte (where Ragen's investigators found "at least one and perhaps two graves" [Ragen 2013:136]) and eventually turned west across Alkali Flat. This branch rejoins the northern branch at Taylor Butte.

The recombined route continues west, passing south of the tiny community of Alfalfa, and then turns northwest toward Redmond, Oregon. Ragen concludes that the party reached the Deschutes River at Cline Falls, west of Redmond, and not at Bend, as Clark and Tiller had believed.
- c. **Hinshaw (continuation, Cline Falls to the Barlow Road).** Here concludes Ragen's fieldwork, but according to Hinshaw's maps, the western alternate follows the Deschutes River north for several miles to Buckhorn Canyon and then turns due north to cross the Crooked River Gorge. From there, Hinshaw's route bears northeast between Haystack Butte and Juniper Butte and continues to join his version of the northern route about two miles south of Madras. This portion of the route is 185.5 miles long.

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

Hinshaw takes the recombined route northeast through Madras and across Mud Springs Creek at Paxton to reach Sagebrush Creek, a couple miles southeast of Gateway. (However, his mapped route does not align with the spring today known as Sagebrush Springs, where emigrants on the northern and western branches are supposed to have met up and camped together on the evening of Sept. 26.) His route then continues northeast across Old Maids Canyon and through Lyle Gap, where it meets US 97 and approximates the highway alignment to meet US 197 at Shaniko Junction.

From there, it continues along US 97 northeast for about 4.5 miles. At that point, a gap exists in Hinshaw's map work between Coon Hollow and Dead Dog Canyon and Buck Hollow, to the north. Hinshaw's route then follows the south rim of Buck Hollow for about 12.5 miles to meet the Deschutes River northeast of Maupin. The route continues north over Tygh Ridge, follows Long Hollow to Boyd, and continues north to meet the Barlow Road (part of the designated Oregon National Historic Trail) at Eightmile Creek.

For the purposes of this feasibility study, the Meek Cutoff will be evaluated in three configurations:

50a: Hambleton's version of the Meek Cutoff

50b: Ragen's version of the Meek Cutoff

50c: Hinshaw's route from the Deschutes River to the Barlow Road

**Historical Assets:** Numerous intact trail segments, some several miles in length across public lands, exist along the first 400 miles or so of the Meek Cutoff. Much of the study route is remote but accessible by four-wheel-drive vehicle, where access is permitted by landowners. The grave of Sarah Chambers, the first emigrant to perish on the Meek Cutoff, is marked and interpreted on private land northwest of Beulah Reservoir. Views of Castle Rock, about four miles north of the Chambers grave, remain largely unaltered. The old wagon trail crosses part of the Castle Rock Wilderness Study Area, where trail setting remains intact but is off-limits to motorized vehicles. BLM Vale District also has designated this area as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern for resource protection purposes. Other Meek Cutoff landmarks, many of them visible from modern highways, include Wright's Point in Harney Valley, Iron Mountain, Paiute Butte, Alec Butte, Horsehead Mountain, Wagontire Mountain, and Little Glass Butte. Malheur National Wildlife Refuge looks much as it did when emigrants passed through. The site of the Lost Hollow encampment (as identified by Hambleton) at Wagontire Mountain, west of Harney Lake, is remote and inaccessible on privately owned land. Modern roads across Misery Flats and through Crooked River Valley retain the 19th century character of the original historic trail, and trail trace is intermittently visible there. Traces of wagon ruts descending the ridge into Crooked River Valley are visible from the Crooked River Highway, and Maury Cemetery, a pioneer graveyard dating to the late 1860s or early 1870s, is located along the trail through the valley. Rimrock Springs is located within the Rimrock Wildlife Management Area of the Crooked River National Grasslands. The first four of 22 emigrant deaths occurred between the springs and The Dalles. Signs along public right-of-way interpret Sherar's Bridge, built near the area where the Meek wagon train crossed the Deschutes River in 1845.

**Historical Summary:** The Oregon State Historic Preservation Office summarizes the significance of the Meek Cutoff as follows:

The Meek Cutoff holds a distinctive place in the history of early travel on the Oregon Trail to the northwest. Meek was a significant early explorer of the region who had more familiarity with the terrain than most travelers. The trail not only represents one of the first attempts at bypassing the main Oregon Trail route to speed up the trip through Oregon, but also demonstrates the peril of travel on untested routes. The resulting publicity generated from the difficult journey of the Meek Party likely galvanized the resolve of many to stay on the main Oregon Trail route even if it might take longer to reach their destination. The story of emigrants trying to get to western Oregon as

quickly as possible to establish their own land claims is well represented in the Meek Cutoff.

(R. Curtis, personal communication, 09/30/2014)

In 1845, Stephen Meek, a veteran of the western fur trade and a wagon guide on the Oregon and Santa Fe trails, proposed to lead emigrants from Fort Boise, Idaho, along a new shortcut to The Dalles of the Columbia River. His route along an existing trapper's trail, Meek told the emigrants, would be 150 miles shorter than the established trail and would avoid a risky stretch of the Columbia River and a difficult passage through the Blue Mountains. Meek had traveled the country he proposed to cross, and he sketched out a plausible route for the emigrants. Ultimately, some 1,000 to 1,500 people, with about 200 to 215 wagons and over 3,000 head of cattle (including 800 oxen) and goats, contracted him to lead them along this new shortcut (Clark and Tiller 1993:20; Jackman and Scharff 1996:18; Bagley 2010:234).<sup>68</sup> The complete wagon train, consisting of numerous independent parties that had decided to follow Meek, was as large as the entire 1843 "Great Migration" to Oregon.

Soon after turning off the main Oregon Trail onto the Meek Cutoff, the emigrants encountered miles of sharp volcanic rocks that injured the feet of the draft animals. Some wagons began lagging, and the wagon train gradually became separated and spread out across the desert country. Some emigrants, mistaking Steens Mountain for the Cascade Range, began to complain that Meek did not really know the country.

Clark and Tiller and other historians, based on emigrant reminiscences, have reported that Stephen Meek had lost his way in the desert and did not know how to get the emigrants to safety. Researcher James Hambleton, however, believes that Meek knew exactly where he was, whereas the emigrants were confused. Upon sighting Steens Mountain in the distance in late August, they were convinced that the snow-covered peaks were the Cascade Mountains and wanted to cross them to reach the Willamette Valley. Meek, to their consternation, was trying to lead them northwest to The Dalles. The emigrants grew mutinous. One day while Meek was out scouting the route, several men set up a makeshift gallows of wagon tongues by which to hang him upon his return, but others rallied to the guide's defense and saved him from execution.

On Sept. 11, 1845, emigrant James Field wrote in his diary that some of the company had finally rebelled against Meek's guidance and insisted on turning west into the heart of the desert, certain it would be a more direct route to their destination. "[Meek] well knew there was a scarcity of grass and water across here and so informed them, but it was nearer and they would have him go it and now blame him for coming the route they obliged him to," Field wrote.<sup>69</sup> Yielding to their insistence, Meek led them to the last known water in that direction, the 80-acre meadow now remembered as Lost Hollow, at the foot of Wagontire Mountain. There the lagging wagon companies gradually gathered in over the next several days, suffering from the hot days, bitter nights, and general anxiety. Already the travelers were worn out from the rigors of the journey, and some were running low on provisions.

Day after day, scouts rode out 30 to 40 miles in all directions, searching in vain for water. Meanwhile, back in camp, some muttered again of hanging their guide. On the fifth day, Meek reported that he had spotted green vegetation along the flank of a mountain to the north. The lead wagons set out along the route he had marked for them. A 30-mile drive through the night brought them to a swampy meadow that was (although the emigrants did not know it) the South Fork of the Crooked River. The remaining wagons rolled in over the next two days. By Sept. 17, all 200-some wagons were in camp.

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<sup>68</sup> In his diary entry of 17 September 1845, Meek Cutoff emigrant Samuel Parker wrote, "198 wagons in company, 2299 lose [loose] cattle, oxen 811. All these cattle to get water and 1051 soles [souls] consume a heap of water" (as quoted by J. Hambleton, personal communication, 9 May 2014).

<sup>69</sup> Quote is from 25 July 1879 issue (p. 2) of the *Willamette Farmer*, which published Field's 1845 journal serially between 18 April and 10 August 1879.

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

And here is where the disputed split reportedly occurred. Meek Cutoff emigrant Daniel Herren told an interviewer in 1881 that the group “divided, one bunch taking to the right of Perlina mountains and coming out on Crooked river near where Prineville now stands, while one traveled west and struck the Deschutes some miles above where Bend is located” (Hunsaker 1919). Meanwhile, either shortly before or after the split at GI Ranch, some emigrants allegedly found several gold nuggets. Over 10 days, the two groups (according to the split-route adherents) traveled separately, meeting up by chance at a spring (Sagebrush Springs or Porter Springs) near today’s community of Gateway, Oregon, on Sept. 26.

From there, all of the emigrants worked their way north and then west along the Crooked River, now without their Indian guide. Where the river entered an impassable gorge, the wagon train turned and began working northwesterly along a series of springs and creeks. On this stretch, 22 people belonging to one wagon party died of mysterious causes. Continuing on, the lead wagons descended the bluffs to the Deschutes River on October 1, and the others arrived over the next two days.

As mounted scouts set out for The Dalles to seek assistance, the emigrants, with the help of Indian swimmers, strung a rope over the roaring river above Sherars Falls and from it suspended a wagon box on pulleys. Some emigrants loaded themselves and their meager belongings into the wagon box and held tight as men on shore carefully drew them over the torrent. Others dismantled their wagons and caulked their boxes to use as boats for ferrying people and belongings across the river. Once all were landed (by October 5), the emigrants took five more days to drive the final 35 miles from the river crossing to The Dalles, where a Methodist mission (Wascopam) and a Hudson’s Bay Company trading post were located (Clark and Tiller 1993).

All told, Stephen Meek’s wagon train took six weeks to cross the driest, rockiest, most rugged country most emigrants ever encountered. Theirs was the first of several widely publicized overland trail calamities, including those of the Donner Party in the Sierra Nevada and of emigrants on the Applegate Trail in 1846. At least 24 members of Meek’s train died on the trail and nearly as many died of their privations after reaching safety and care at the Methodist mission at The Dalles.

The deaths of 24 emigrants over a short stretch along the Meek Cutoff, as well as the ongoing illnesses and later deaths of many of the survivors, helped motivate Oregonians to find a new southern route, which led to exploration and opening of the Applegate Trail/Southern Route to Oregon in 1846. However, the Meek Cutoff was not entirely abandoned. In 1853, Elijah Elliott started west along the cutoff with about 200 wagons and a thousand emigrants, planning to join the newly opened Free Emigrant Road and carry on to the Willamette Valley. At some point, the Elliott Train left the cutoff and became lost in Harney Valley but eventually reached the Free Emigrant Road, which had been blazed for them by road builders from the Oregon settlements. In 1854, another train of 121 wagons led by William Macy followed all or part of the Meek Cutoff into the desert to connect to the Free Emigrant Road. Eventually, some settlers traveled the Meek Cutoff into central Oregon and stopped to make a home there. Rumors of a lost gold source, supposedly discovered by the 1845 Meek emigrants as they struggled across eastern Oregon, triggered a local rush in the 1850s that led to gold discoveries in nearby counties, but the Lost Blue Bucket deposit has never been identified.

A query of OCTA’s COED database identified seven emigrant documents with mention of “Meek Cutoff” or “Free Emigrant Road.” Five of these date to 1845 and are attributable to Meek’s wagon party of that year. The remainder date to 1853 and are presumed to relate to the Elliott party, which used the Meek Cutoff to access the Free Emigrant Road. Employing Mattes’ (1988) ratio of 250 emigrants per known emigrant journal, an estimated 1,750 emigrants traveled all or most of the Meek Cutoff. Documented emigrant numbers as described above, however, put the number of 1845 emigrants nearer 1,500. Much of the cutoff was used again in 1853-1854 and later by approximately 1,600 travelers bound for the Free Emigrant Road (also a study route), which puts the total emigration along the Meek Cutoff at around 3,100 persons.

**Conclusion:** In sum, approximately 3,000 emigrants used all or part of the Meek Cutoff to cross Oregon between 1845 and 1854. The route, opened the same season as the Hastings Cutoff, is among the first

examples of emigrants trying an untested shortcut with disastrous results. Substantial disagreement exists among respected researchers as to the best alignment of the northern branch of the Meek Cutoff and especially whether the western branch was traveled by the Meek company wagons, and the route of the western branch (assuming it exists) also has been debated among students of the trail. The Oregon State Historic Preservation Office observes, “The important story represented by the route remains, regardless of whether one is an advocate of the traditional route promoted by Hinshaw and recently refined by Ragen, or the alternate route promoted by Hambleton” (R. Curtis, personal communication, 09/30/2014). Many trail-related places of historical interest, including original trail remnants with intact setting, notable landmarks and springs, possible emigrant graves, the Deschutes River crossing at Sherar’s Bridge, and other related sites, exist along the study routes.

Hambleton’s single route is 453.5 miles long and would add that number of new miles to the Oregon National Historic Trail and to the National Trails system. Ragen’s proposed route with the split is about 459 miles long and would add that number of new miles to the Oregon NHT and to the National Trails System.

**50a. Meek Cutoff [Hambleton].** This route description is included in the summary above. A placeholder has been added here so that study route numbers in Appendix A will correspond to study route numbers in the main body of this feasibility study.

**50b. Meek Cutoff [Ragen].** This route description is included in the summary above. A placeholder has been added here so that study route numbers in Appendix A will correspond to study route numbers in the main body of this feasibility study.

**50c. Meek Cutoff [Hinshaw, Deschutes River to the Barlow Road].** This route description is included in the summary above. A placeholder has been added here so that study route numbers in Appendix A will correspond to study route numbers in the main body of this feasibility study.

**51. Free Emigrant Road.** This 316-mile study route across Oregon branches off the Meek Cutoff at the GI Ranch on the South Fork of the Crooked River and ends at Springfield, Oregon. The route is under study for the Oregon National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** The Free Emigrant Road study route proposed here consists of three sections. First is an isolated 74-mile eastern section of trail that deviates from the Meek Cutoff to detour south of Malheur and Harney lakes and then reconnects to the Meek Cutoff in Warm Springs Valley. A second section, 127 miles long, branches off the Meek Cutoff farther west and links to the east end of the original Free Emigrant Road near today’s La Pine, Oregon. The third section, 115 miles in length, approximates the original Free Emigrant Road as it was blazed through the Cascade Mountains from La Pine to Springfield, Oregon. These trail sections are described below from east to west.

The first section of the Free Emigrant Road study route turns off the Meek Cutoff at US 20 in Harney Valley, about 16 miles east of Burns, Oregon. (Both Ragen’s and Hambleton’s versions of the Meek Cutoff cross US 20 in Harney Valley at the location where this study route branches off.) The interpolated route strikes south and then swings southeasterly to the east end of Malheur Lake. It follows around the south end of the lake, passing the location now occupied by the headquarters of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, to cross the Donner und Blitzen River at a place later known as Rocky Ford. According to Menefee and Tiller (1977b:230), the wagons rolled past The Narrows between Malheur and Harney lakes and continued around the south edge of Harney Lake. They then headed northwest through Warm Springs Valley, crossed Warm Springs Creek, and rejoined the Meek Cutoff in Warm Springs Valley south of Derrick Lake. (Both Ragen’s and Hambleton’s versions of the Meek Cutoff intersect again at this location.)

From Warm Springs Valley, the emigrants probably continued along either Hambleton’s or Ragen’s Meek Cutoff route, which head generally west past Stinking Lake and Silver Lake and cross US 395 and

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

US 20 to intercept Buck Creek. Both versions of the Meek Cutoff continue northwest to the GI Ranch on the South Fork of the Crooked River. This part of the route is not mapped or included in mileage estimates of the Free Emigrant study route for the purposes of this study.

The second section of the study route heads northwesterly from GI Ranch along the alignment that has been proposed by researcher Brooks Ragen for the western branch of the Meek Cutoff.<sup>70</sup> This route, which is also potentially part of the Meek Cutoff, heads west between Gerry Mountain and Hampton Buttes. At today's Pringle Flat Reservoir, the route begins winding northwesterly across Bear Creek and curls around the north side of Sugarloaf Butte. Now heading west, it flanks Milliron Hill to meet Little Bear Creek. From there, one wagon party followed the creek downstream, west, to its confluence with Bear Creek at Emigrant Basin, and then continued north along Bear Creek to Taylor Butte, south of Prineville Reservoir. Another party struck northeasterly toward Sheep Rock, then turned north and drove up the bluffs to the foot of Alkali Butte (where Ragen's investigators found "at least one and perhaps two graves" [Ragen 2013:136]).

It next turns west across Alkali Flat to Taylor Butte, south of Prineville Reservoir. The route dips around the south side of the butte and strikes due west across level terrain. About 3.5 miles west of the Deschutes/Crook County boundary, this section of study route permanently diverges from Ragen's proposed alignment of the Meek Cutoff. Where his variant turns northwest, the Free Emigrant route continues west through the Bend Municipal Airport to the junction of US 20 and US 97, a mile north of Bend, Oregon. The study route then strikes south along the Deschutes River and passes through the city of Bend. It approximates the US 97 corridor as it continues south into today's Deschutes National Forest, passes east of Lava Butte, and then angles south-southwesterly between the highway and the Little Deschutes River to La Pine, Oregon.

The third section of the route starts at La Pine and follows the Little Deschutes River southwesterly for about 18 miles to Crescent Creek. It continues west along the creek, passing north of Odell Butte between two lava flows called Black Rock Lava and Black Rock Butte. It next crosses OR-58 to Big Marsh Creek and follows that watercourse upstream to its confluence with Refrigerator Creek, about a mile southeast of Crescent Lake. The route continues west, passing south of Crescent Lake and north of Summit Lake to meet the Middle Fork of the Willamette River. It follows that river west and then north, running beneath today's Hills Creek Lake for some seven miles. The Free Emigrant Road study route continues along the Middle Fork of the Willamette River past the community of Oakridge and then runs beneath Lookout Point Lake and Dexter Reservoir for about 14 miles. At Trent, the trail leaves the river and follows the alignment of OR-58 northwest. It rejoins the Middle Fork of the Willamette at Springfield, Oregon.

The complete alignment described above is a spliced combination of route segments that were independently mapped or generally described over many years by researchers Lowell Tiller and Leah Menefee, Jim Renner, Del Spencer, Brooks Ragen, and the USDA Forest Service. Specifically, the detour around Malheur and Harney lakes is extrapolated from Menefee and Tiller's descriptions and maps in the Cutoff Fever series of the *Oregon Historical Quarterly* (1977b:151-157 and 1977c:220-221). The second section, between GI Ranch and Bend, almost entirely follows the route proposed by Ragen as the west variant of the split in the Meek Cutoff, which he retraced with an interdisciplinary team that recorded emigration era trail trace, artifacts, and features along the way. The western portion of that second section as it approaches Bend, and the northern part of the third section heading south between Bend and La Pine, were interpolated by Renner from 1:100,000 scale topographic maps and historical information that was available in the mid-1990s. The Deschutes National Forest provided the alignment of the third section between La Pine and Crescent Lake, based on fieldwork conducted by professional

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<sup>70</sup> Ragen's western route, being based on fieldwork, is deemed more accurate for this purpose than other suggested alignments that have been interpolated from topographic maps. Whether or not the western branch becomes designated as part of the Meek Cutoff, this route or something very similar would have been followed by the 1853 and 1854 Free Emigrant wagon trains.



surveyors and agency personnel; and OCTA researcher Del Spencer spent many years searching out and mapping the stretch between Crescent Lake and the Willamette River. But beyond that groundwork on the western section of the trail, says Gary Brumbaugh (who spent several summers attempting to trace the route east of the Cascades), there is “virtually no absolute sign” of the physical trace that can be confidently identified as the original Free Emigrant Road (G. Brumbaugh, personal communication, 10/25/2012). Much of the alignment is conjectural.

Others have offered alternative ideas (but not maps) of where the Elliott and Macy wagon trains may have traveled. For example, Meek Cutoff researcher James Hambleton notes that Elliott’s wagon train “became hopelessly lost for several days” after turning off the Meek Cutoff into the desert south of Harney Lake. He speculates that lack of water forced the emigrants northwesterly to intercept the faint 1845 track once more “somewhere west of Harney Lake and Silver Creek.” In Hambleton’s scenario, Elliott’s train continued along the 1845 cutoff past the Meek encampment at Lost Hollow to a point just beyond the Lost Hollow Sinks. Then, instead of making its way to the springs at the GI Ranch on the South Fork of the Crooked River before leaving the Meek Cutoff, as described above, the 1853 Elliott train (and the 1854 Macy wagon train, as well) would have turned away from the Meek Cutoff just north of the sinks. Striking northwesterly across flat terrain for about 20 miles, they would have skirted the western slopes of Glass Buttes and Hampton Buttes. Next, Hambleton conjectures, the wagons would have continued another 18 miles northwest to Pringle Flat, where later surveyors made note of the “Macy Emigrant Road” and “Macy Wagon Road.” From there, this route would go northwesterly for about five miles to the headwaters of Ant Creek, where Alonzo Gesner’s 1876 cadastral survey noted the presence of a trail that he identified as Meek Cutoff (J. Hambleton, personal communications, 10/6/2012 and 9/5/2014). The route would follow Ant Creek for about four miles, cross Bear Creek, and continue another four miles to Little Bear Creek, where it would merge with the route across Alkali Flat, as described above. Hambleton’s route has not been mapped or field-checked and is not included as an alternative in this study, but is described here because it reflects uncertainties surrounding the alignment of this study route.

Adding to these competing ideas and uncertainties, Oregon historian Stephen Dow Beckham notes that the Oregon Central Military Wagon Road, a congressionally funded land grant road constructed in 1865, overlies, crosses, or closely parallels some parts of the Free Emigrant Road west of the Deschutes River.<sup>71</sup> The military road was built by hired laborers and subsequently saw heavy use by army supply wagons and herds of livestock (see Beckham 1981). These, not emigrants of the 1850s and 1860s, he suggests, created many of the ruts and road features that still are visible along the route and that have been attributed to the Free Emigrant wagon parties (S. Beckham, personal communication, 7/22/2013). USFS Archeologist Leslie Hickerson, however, states that she has been able to distinguish the two roads through the Crescent Ranger District of Oregon’s Deschutes National Forest, and she observes that “there are not many places where the exact routes are coincident” (L. Hickerson, personal communication, 05/19/2014).

**Historical Assets:** Researchers have observed likely trail remnants through Deschutes National Forest, but those locations are kept confidential by the managing agency for resource protection reasons and therefore would not be interpreted or advertised to the public unless that policy were to change. The Oakridge Pioneer Museum offers displays and information about the Free Emigrant Road, and the route through Oakridge is marked. An interpretive kiosk in that community is located in Green Waters Park. Ragen observed graves and trail ruts along his Meek Cutoff western variant, which was used by the Free Emigrant parties as they either followed the earlier Meek wagons or opened their own trail through the area.

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<sup>71</sup> Researcher and mapper Del Spencer clarifies that the Free Emigrant and Central Oregon Military roads cross only at two locations but otherwise “were miles apart in some areas” (D. Spencer, personal communication, 10/24/2012).

## ***Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes***

***Historical Summary:*** In 1850, emigrants following the original route of the Oregon Trail from Fort Boise, Idaho, entered Oregon south of Nyssa. From there they traveled northwest to the middle Columbia River and then turned down the river to The Dalles. They rafted or took a steamboat down the river or followed the Barlow Toll Road around the south shoulder of Mt. Hood, usually to end the trip in the northern end of the Willamette Valley.

After taking emigrants along the Meek Cutoff across eastern Oregon in 1845, Stephen Meek petitioned the Provisional Government of the Oregon Territory the following year for a charter to construct a toll road at his own expense across central Oregon (Clark and Tiller 1993:137). He intended this road to provide an alternative to the upper Columbia River route. The provisional government rejected Meek's petition and his road was never built.

Unhappy that traffic was not reaching their settlements, boosters in the southern Willamette Valley proposed to funnel emigrants into the area by planning and constructing a direct wagon road across central Oregon. In 1852, the territorial legislature passed a bill to explore a route west across the Cascade Mountains that would strike the Oregon Trail "at some point between Malheur river and Fort Boise," but lawmakers failed to appropriate funds for the work (Bagley, in prep., p. 2). Instead, residents collected donations for the project and in August that year sent a seven-man party of "Road Viewers" to scout a route west to east from Eugene, Oregon, to Fort Boise, Idaho (Menefee and Tiller 1976:324; Gray 1990:34).

The Road Viewers found a viable pass through the Cascade Mountains and followed an Indian trail toward the Deschutes River. They then worked their way toward the South Fork Crooked River and from there started following the Meek Cutoff east, but were attacked by Indians near Harney Lake in central Oregon. Although none of the party was killed, the men lost four horses and all of their provisions. Now subsisting on wild plants, the Road Viewers cut northeast to the old Oregon Trail near Burnt River. After receiving medical assistance from physicians who were emigrating along the trail, they returned home in October, two months after setting out, with news that a central route had been identified (Menefee and Tiller 1976; Gray 1990).

The following March and April, area residents collected another \$3,000, formed a commission to oversee the work, and soon contracted a crew to open the road by June 15, 1853 (Gray 1990:35). Because this road would be open toll-free to everyone, it was called the Free Emigrant Road—a wry jab at the Barlow Toll Road around Mt. Hood. This free road would be the center link between two older trails: westbound travelers would follow the 1845 Meek Cutoff that crosses from Vale to the South Fork of the Crooked River, where they would pick up the new Free Emigrant Road; and that, in turn, would link to the 1846 Applegate Trail/Southern Route to Oregon.

In April 1853, a route-marking team set out, followed by a building crew. Meanwhile, settler Elijah Elliott headed east in July via the old Oregon Trail to Fort Boise to meet and conduct his wife and children, who were emigrating that summer, to the Willamette Valley. Elliott had been commissioned to tell other emigrants about the new route and then lead the way back to the Willamette Valley via the Free Emigrant Road, which promoters promised would be opened and ready for traffic by the time his wagon train reached the Cascade Mountains. Although he had never traveled by the proposed route, Elliott evidently felt confident that he could guide the emigration across the desert along the Meek Cutoff to meet the east end of the new road (Menefee and Tiller 1977a:70; Gray 1990:36).

As Elliott rode east along the Oregon Trail to meet his family, however, the situation shifted behind him. The road builders, unable to punch through deep snow in the Cascade Mountains, had returned home in mid-July and announced that the new wagon road could not be ready for use that season. Unaware of that critical change, Elliott started west from the Malheur River along the old Meek Cutoff track with more than 200 wagons, a thousand emigrants, and over 6,000 head of livestock (Menefee and Tiller

1977b:147).<sup>72</sup> His inexperience as a wagon guide and lack of familiarity with the area quickly grew apparent, and the suffering emigrants soon bucked Elliott's leadership. Upon reaching the Silvies River east of today's Burns, Oregon, the company debated whether to follow Meek's 1845 track along the north side of Malheur and Harney lakes or leave the cutoff, swing wide, and pass south of the lakes. They mistakenly believed that a branch of the Deschutes River drained into the west end of Harney Lake. Having heard of Meek's difficulties in crossing the Deschutes, the emigrants, contrary to Elliott's advice, decided to drive south around the lakes and meet the river nearer its headwaters, where it could be more easily forded. Accordingly, in mid-September they left the Meek wagon track and drove into the Harney Valley desert, ultimately making an unnecessary loop around the lakes and rejoining the trail farther west. The detour cost the company at least a week's travel (Menefee and Tiller 1977c:220-222).

Now worried about reaching the settlements before their oxen and provisions gave out, the company sent several scouting parties ahead to find the east end of the presumably wagon-ready Free Emigrant Road, and from there ride to the settlements to send back help. After much difficulty and suffering, one group of outriders finally located the outlet of the new road on the Deschutes River near La Pine, Oregon. But that road was not as they expected (Menefee and Tiller 1977d:293).

After the first crew of road builders gave up and went home, a second work crew had returned to the mountains in late August to make a hurried, last-ditch attempt to open the road for the oncoming wagons. As cold rain settled in for the winter, though, they too packed up and headed back to the settlements—just three days before the outriders stumbled across their abandoned camp. Expecting to find a fully improved and opened road, the emigrants instead discovered a rough track too narrow to admit wagons through the forests. They would have to build their own trail, following trees blazed by the road builders to mark the route (Menefee and Tiller 1977a:67-72).

The travelers now struggled into the Cascade Mountains, battling monsoonal rains, frost and snow, exhaustion, and starvation. Along the way they had to fell standing timber, cut through or detour around huge logs lying in their path, and ford icy mountain streams (Menefee and Tiller 1997d; Spencer 2014). But in mid-October, one of the scouts searching for help encountered settlers, who spread word of the emigrants' troubles and quickly organized a rescue party of 23 wagons bearing 20,000 pounds of flour, as well as bacon, potatoes, and 290 head of work and beef cattle (*Oregon Statesman*, 1 November 1853, as quoted in Menefee and Tiller 1977d:299-313). Even so, the emigrants' troubles were not over: some 27 arduous, un-bridged crossings of the Willamette River yet lay between them and safety. The first wagon of Elliott's train finally reached the settlements on October 24, 1853, and the last arrived in early November (Menefee and Tiller 1997d; Owen 2015; Bagley, in prep.).

The following summer, William Macy, another resident of the southern Willamette Valley—and one who knew the country, successfully guided 121 wagons (assuming an average of four emigrants per wagon, approximately 484 people) along the combined Meek-Free Emigrant-Applegate trail (Bassett et al. 1998:230). Although the route continued to see some use through the 1860s, the Elliott and Macy wagon trains were the only groups of appreciable size, accounting for approximately 1,500 emigrants on the Free Emigrant Road.

A query of OCTA's COED database identified seven records that mention the Meek Cutoff and/or Free Emigrant Road. Five of the records are from 1845, pre-dating the Free Emigrant Road, and are presumed to be specific to the original Stephen Meek wagon train of that year. The remaining two records date to 1853 and are presumed to be related to the Elliott party's experience on the Free Emigrant Road that year. Based on Mattes' (1988) ratio of 250 emigrants per record, the volume of traffic on the Free Emigrant Road would amount to about 500 people. However, contemporaneous documentation shows that figure to be a significant underestimate. The actual total is probably closer to 1,600 emigrants.

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<sup>72</sup> They reached the Willamette Valley that fall with 3,970 cattle, 1,700 sheep, and 288 horses and mules (Menefee and Tiller 1977b:147).

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

**Conclusion:** In sum, approximately 1,500 emigrants used the Free Emigrant Road in 1853 and 1854; others, possibly amounting to a hundred people, used it in subsequent years, bringing the total volume of traffic between 1853 and 1869 to about 1,600 emigrants. Except for the western end of the route, much of the historical alignment of the Free Emigrant Trail is mapped based on limited documentary evidence; physical evidence of the trail is sparse. The study route alignment is spliced together from the works of five independent researchers, and variations of the route have been suggested by other researchers.

Designation of the Free Emigrant Road would add 316 miles to the Oregon National Historic Trail and to the National Trails System. Its designation depends on designation of the Meek Cutoff, from which the Free Emigrant Road branches.

**52. Whitman Mission Route.** This 37.5-mile study route, which is under consideration for inclusion as a component of the Oregon National Historic Trail, branches off the designated route of the Oregon Trail approximately 12 miles east of Pendleton, Oregon, and runs north to Whitman Mission (west of the town of Walla Walla, Wash.). Whitman Mission National Historic Site is identified by the National Park Service as a high potential site on the Oregon National Historic Trail even though at present it is not physically linked to the NHT as the designated trail currently is configured.

**Route Description:** Emigrants following today's designated route of the Oregon National Historic Trail descended the Blue Mountains from Deadman Pass via Poker Jim Ridge to reach Cayuse Springs. Emigrant diaries refer to visiting or camping near Cayuse Springs, also called Cayuse Post Office and Cayuse Station, which today is located on lands belonging to the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation.

From there, the designated NHT turns west and meets the Columbia River at Biggs Junction, Oregon; but in 1840-1847, emigrants drove northwesterly toward the Umatilla River and on to Whitman Mission. The Whitman Mission feasibility study route begins at Cayuse, where it splits off the currently designated Oregon National Historic Trail. It crosses the Umatilla River at several fording locales below Cayuse Springs and continues toward the present town of Adams. The study route then follows Wildhorse Creek, approximating the alignment of today's Union Pacific railroad grade, for about 4.5 miles to Athena, Oregon. Although no identifiable trail trace has been identified along these sections, Wildhorse Creek is referenced by several emigrant sources.

An 1865 GLO plat shows an early road, presumed to be the historic route of the trail or closely approximating the route, heading north from the vicinity of Athena for 6.7 miles to the crest of Big Hill. Multiple wagon swales on private property descend Big Hill into the Walla Walla Valley via the Pine Creek drainage, where the trail forked (see Ebey 1997:181). Beginning in 1854, travelers heading into Washington Territory via the Naches Pass Trail took the left (Swartz Creek) branch; the right branch continued toward Whitman Mission.

From the area where Pine Creek enters the Walla Walla Valley, the study route curves sharply east to ford the Walla Walla River at its confluence with Stone Creek and Garrison Creek. It continues northwest to the mission, situated between the Walla Walla River and Mill Creek about 2.5 miles west of Walla Walla, Washington.

**Historical Assets:** Trail-related places of historical and recreational interest include the Tamástslikt Cultural Institute east of Pendleton, Oregon, which interprets impacts of the Oregon Trail, the missions, and the white settlements of the region on the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla Indian peoples; Whitman Mission National Historical Site, where the murder of mission residents in 1847 ignited a regional war; multiple wagon swales on private land approaching and perhaps within the Walla Walla Valley; the Fort Walla Walla Museum, a 17-acre site that interprets the 1858 military fort and the settlement history of the area; and the Frenchtown Historical Site, which commemorates the French-Canadian Hudson's Bay Company employees who resided in the valley. In the area of Pine and Swartz

creeks, a monument commemorates a Hudson's Bay Company farm that supported Old Fort Walla Walla, which may have been the reason emigrants camped around that location. In addition, signs are posted in the Blue Mountains where Marcus and Narcissa Whitman crossed into the Columbia River Valley. At Milton-Freewater, about 11 miles from Whitman Mission, possible trail remnants have been identified in residential yards and agricultural fields, but they have not been substantiated as part of the Oregon Trail. Trails researchers believe those remnants were part of the early stage road or roads associated with the establishment of the communities of Milton and Freewater in the late 1860s.

**Historical Summary:** In 1835 the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions sent Dr. Marcus Whitman, a physician and Presbyterian elder, and the Rev. Samuel Parker, a Congregational Church pastor, west to seek locations to build missions for the Indians of the Oregon Country. Whitman returned east that autumn and in 1836 headed west again with his bride, Narcissa, and fellow newlywed missionaries Henry and Eliza Spalding. Narcissa Whitman and Eliza Spalding became the first European American women to travel overland to Oregon, a landmark event in the history of the Oregon Trail. Historian Clifford Drury (1973a:18) writes, "The successful crossing of the Rockies...by Mrs. Whitman and Mrs. Spalding on July 4, 1836, unlocked the mountain gateway for men who wanted to take their families with them to Oregon. Where women could go riding horseback on side-saddles, other women and children could follow in covered wagons." The Whitmans did take a wagon, which they eventually modified into a cart, as far as Fort Boise in present-day Idaho. That was farther west than any wheeled vehicle had ever traveled before (Bagley 2010:63).

Soon after their arrival, the Whitmans established a mission station at Waiilatpu, on the Walla Walla River some 24 miles east of the Hudson's Bay Company trading post called Fort Nez Percés (also known as Old Fort Walla Walla), in today's state of Washington. (The Spaldings established their mission among the Nez Perce at Lapwai, on the Clearwater River in Idaho.) Whitman's Mission for the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla Indians was "the first outpost on the Oregon Trail west of the Blue Mountains, so that in coming years much of his time and resources would be devoted to the immigrants" (Drury 1973a:226).

Marcus Whitman dedicated much of his time and energy toward promoting and protecting the emigration to Oregon, and in 1843, with the help of a Cayuse Indian friend called Stickus, he guided a wagon train of about 875 emigrants west from Fort Hall to Whitman Mission (Mowry 1901). These were the first emigrant wagons to cross through the Blue Mountains and reach the Columbia River, "contrary to all the sinister assertions of all those who pretended it to be impossible" (Whitman to Secretary of War 1843, as quoted by Drury 1973b:396). Others followed, and increasingly travelers grew to count on Whitman and his workers to assist them with medical attention, provisions, shelter, wagon repairs, and other critical needs. A number of children who had been orphaned on the trail were left at the mission to be reared by Mrs. Whitman; and some emigrants, arriving late in the travel season, overwintered there. Fifty-five emigrants stayed at the crowded complex and were fed by the mission during the winter of 1844–1845. Indian agent, physician, and Methodist missionary Elijah White, purportedly motivated by ill will, in 1845 began advising emigrants to bypass Whitman Mission by following the Umatilla River (instead of the Walla Walla) to the Columbia.<sup>73</sup> At that confluence, emigrants could build rafts and float to The Dalles, where the Methodist mission would sell them provisions at lower prices than those charged by Whitman (Drury 1973b:173). This Umatilla River cutoff helped emigrants avoid an unnecessary northerly detour to Waiilatpu, and while the new route denied Whitman Mission its primary source of income, it also eased the overwhelming demand that needy emigrants placed on the attention, time, and resources of Marcus and Narcissa Whitman. Two years later, Whitman himself escorted a wagon train west over the Columbia Plateau directly to The Dalles, thereby circumventing not only Whitman Mission but the entire, risky upper Columbia River segment of the Oregon Trail. Most travelers quickly adopted these more direct routes, which eliminated many miles and hazards from their journey. However, overlanders in critical need of assistance and medical attention continued to loop

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<sup>73</sup> In 1843, White and Whitman had engaged in a public dispute in Oregon City, with White accusing Whitman of overcharging needy emigrants for food (Drury 1973b:86).

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

north to Waiilatpu to seek succor from the missionaries. Tribes of the region grew increasingly disturbed by the influx of emigrants, aided and encouraged by Whitman, into their territories.

In 1847, Marcus and Narcissa Whitman and 12 others at the mission perished at the hands of some Cayuse men who held the doctor accountable for several measles-related deaths among their families. The attackers destroyed the mission and took captive the surviving women and girls who had been living there. The captives were ransomed a month later, but the following year a regional war erupted, fueled by native peoples' resistance to the continuing, alarming loss of their lands to settlers.<sup>74</sup> Fearful overlanders abandoned the Whitman Mission route during the 1848 emigration season, and emigrant use thereafter was infrequent. In 1854, a small amount of emigrant traffic briefly traveled the Whitman Mission trail from Cayuse Springs to the trail junction Pine Creek, where they turned off to follow the left fork toward the Naches Pass Trail (another feasibility study route evaluated in this study). However, only curiosity seekers would have chosen the right branch, traveling 10 to 15 miles out of their way to see the ruins of Whitman Mission.

Nearly all emigrants in the early 1840s traveled by way of the Whitman Mission. Unruh (1979:84) estimates Oregon traffic for 1840–1844 at about 2,500 emigrants. By his accounting, another 7,700 people traveled overland to Oregon between 1845, when most emigrants began following the more direct Columbia Plateau route to The Dalles, and 1847, when Whitman Mission was destroyed. Based on Unruh's numbers, then, an estimated 2,500 to 3,000 travelers used the Whitman Mission Route between 1840 and 1847. In 1853–1854, approximately 400 more travelers on the Naches Pass Trail followed portions of the Whitman Mission Route between the Blue Mountains and the confluence of the Walla Walla and Columbia rivers. There is good documentation, then, to show that total traffic over the Whitman Mission Route from 1840 to 1854, when any significant emigrant traffic on the route ended, amounts to about 2,900 to 3,400 emigrants.

A query of OCTA's COED database for mention of Whitman Mission identified 24 emigrant records dating from 1841 to 1869. Based on Mattes' (1988) ratio of 250 emigrants per record, approximately 6,000 people traveled on or near the Whitman Mission route between 1840 and 1869. Given Unruh's traffic figures based on historical documentation, that number seems a generous overestimate.

**Conclusion:** In sum, this route is significant for being the first and original route of the Oregon Trail, the route by which the first emigrant wagons entered what today are the states of Oregon and Washington, and for its association with Marcus and Narcissa Whitman, who were among the earliest overland emigrants to The Oregon Country. Marcus Whitman himself actively promoted the emigration, encouraged Americans to undertake the trip, and helped lead some settlers into Oregon. Narcissa Whitman was one of the first two European-American women to travel overland to Oregon in advance of the main emigration, and the destruction of the mission at Waiilatpu is a landmark event in the history of the settlement of the West. The Oregon emigration over this route—and the missionaries themselves—profoundly influenced the cultures and economies of the Cayuse, Walla Wallas, Umatillas, Nez Perce, and other native peoples of the Columbia Plateau country. The mission was a key waystation and haven for early emigrants and, in the mid-1840s when much of the trail traffic bypassed Waiilatpu, it remained a haven for the needy. The total volume of traffic on the trail between 1840 and 1854 is estimated from about 2,900 to 3,400 emigrants. Several trail-related places of historical interest, including Tamástslikt Cultural Institute, Whitman Mission National Historic Site, and some recently discovered wagon swales, exist along the route.

Designation of the Whitman Mission Route adds up to 37.5 new miles to the Oregon National Historic Trail and to the National Trails System.

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<sup>74</sup> This conflict, commonly called the Cayuse Indian War, lasted until 1855.

**53. Upper Columbia River Route.** This 166-mile study route includes two alternates that approach the Columbia River from separate locations. One alternate begins at Whitman Mission at Waiilatpu, following west along the Walla Walla River. The second alternate branches off the Whitman Mission Route near Pine Creek and heads northwesterly to meet the first alternate at the Walla Walla River. The two alternates merge into a single trail that continues to Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Nez Percés on the Columbia River. From there, emigrants could float the Columbia River, follow a rough livestock trail along the riverbank to The Dalles, or later, head over the Cascade Mountains via the Naches Pass Trail. The Upper Columbia River Route is under consideration for inclusion as a component of the Oregon National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** "Upper Columbia River Route" does not refer to a route along the upper reaches of the Columbia River in Canada, but to that portion of the Columbia River emigrant route that lies upstream from The Dalles, Oregon. The study route has two variants that led wagon traffic toward the river, with two corresponding points of origin. Both variants branch off of the Whitman Mission study route and so would only be designated if the Whitman study route is designated, as well.

- a. **The Whitman Mission variant** of the Upper Columbia River Route begins at the Whitman Mission site west of Walla Walla, Washington, heads west along Mill Creek, and angles gently west-northwest, paralleling US 12 and the Walla Walla River. Approximately two miles east of Touchet, Washington, the study route continues west as the river begins a bend to the south. The study route crosses the Touchet River north of the town of Touchet and follows US 12 northwesterly for about five miles to rejoin the Walla Walla River, which has turned back to the north, near the mouth of Nine Mile Canyon.
- b. **The Pine Creek variant** of the Upper Columbia River Route forks off the Whitman Mission study route at the emigrant campground area on Pine Creek, near the junction of Umapine and Buroker Roads, almost two miles south of the Washington-Oregon border and about six miles northwest of Sunnyside, Oregon. This route heads northwesterly, crosses into Washington, and continues to a ford of the Walla Walla River three miles southwest of Touchet, Wash. It crosses to the north bank, continuing northwesterly, and after four miles merges with the Whitman Mission branch near the mouth of Nine Mile Canyon.

The combined route continues west to the Columbia River at the site of Old Fort Walla Walla (earlier known as Fort Nez Percés), about 1.5 miles southwest of today's Wallula, Washington. The entire trail from Whitman Mission to the Hudson's Bay Company post is depicted in John C. Fremont's report of his 1843–1844 expedition to Oregon and California. In his report, the explorer mentioned passing an emigrant encampment a short distance west of Whitman Mission (Jackson and Spence 1970:552).

Historically, Old Fort Walla Walla was located on a sand spit at the confluence of the Columbia and Walla Walla rivers, but today the site is submerged by Lake Wallula. There at the fort, Oregon emigrants of the early 1840s faced a choice: they could float the Columbia River to The Dalles on homemade rafts or rented bateaux, or they could continue with wagons and loose livestock along the south bank, traversing steep cliffs, rocky shorelines, and stream confluences.<sup>75</sup> Both the river channel and the shore route are considered to be variants of the Upper Columbia River Route, sharing a single corridor.

From the confluence of the Walla Walla and Columbia rivers in today's Washington State, the Upper Columbia River Route continues southwesterly down the Columbia. About five miles downstream from Old Fort Walla Walla, the river becomes the boundary between Oregon and Washington. The route

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<sup>75</sup> Emigrant and trail-blazer Peter Burnett, traveling overland in 1843, described the Hudson's Bay Company bateau as a boat "made expressly for the navigation of the Columbia and its tributaries." He wrote, "They are open, about forty feet long, five feet wide, and three feet deep, made of light, tough materials" (1946:77). Burnett and a traveling companion acquired a bateau at Fort Nez Percés and, under the direction of their Indian river pilot, successfully shot the rapids of the Columbia River to reach Wascopam in safety.

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

continues downstream past McNary Dam and the town of Umatilla, Oregon, to the mouth of the Umatilla River.

From Umatilla, the study route continues westerly down the Columbia River past Irrigon, Boardman, John Day, and other small river towns to The Dalles, Oregon. The Upper Columbia River Route meets the already designated Columbia Plateau Route in two places. Those traveling by water would meet the designated Oregon NHT at The Dalles. Those walking, riding, or driving along the south bank of the Columbia River would join the designated NHT in the vicinity of the Deschutes River crossing (near Biggs Junction) and continue overland along the trail to The Dalles, where the Upper Columbia River study route ends.

**Historical Assets:** Between the mid-1930s and 1971, the US government constructed four massive dams across the Columbia River downstream from the northern reach of the Upper Columbia River Route. Water backed up behind the Bonneville Dam (completed in 1938), the McNary Dam (completed in 1957), the Dalles Dam (completed in 1960), and the John Day Dam (completed in 1971). Today, the riverbank trail of the Upper Columbia River Route is almost entirely underwater or destroyed by modern road construction, and the channel's dangerous chutes and rapids, including the famed Celilo Falls, are drowned beneath the reservoir, as well.

Nonetheless, several sites and landmarks of historical and recreational interest to trails visitors exist along the route. The Fort Walla Walla Museum is a 17-acre site that, though not directly related to the emigrant trail, interprets a 19th century military fort and the settlement history of the area. The Frenchtown historic and interpretive site, located two miles west of Whitman Mission and partly owned by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, is the site of an 1823 fur trade settlement that later was crossed by the Oregon Trail. It is where a four-day fight, the 1855 Battle of Walla Walla, occurred between Oregon militia and Walla Walla, Cayuse, Palouse and Yakama warriors who were resisting seizure of their land. Deep wagon swales still exist on federal land east of Wallula junction. The Twin Sisters, a distinctive basalt feature along the Columbia River just south of the mouth of the Walla Walla River, is visible from a great distance and served as a landmark for native peoples, trappers, and emigrants traveling through the area. (The feature's native Sahaptin name is Wáatpatukaykas, "standing for the spirits place" [Hunn et al., 2015:96].) Near the historic trail crossing of the Deschutes River, Wet of Biggs Junction, is a public park with interpretation, although the exhibits currently focus on the Columbia Plateau wagon traffic rather than that along the Columbia River. Near Celilo Village, an arched walkway designed by artist Maya Linn is planned to extend over the river to memorialize Celilo Falls, submerged below. The town of The Dalles includes a complex of Oregon Trail-related historic sites, buildings, and monuments, and the nearby Columbia Gorge Discovery Center and Wasco County Historical Museum include American Indian, Oregon Trail, and settlement-related exhibits. The Upper Columbia River Route extends into the eastern portion of the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area, where visitors on the river, on the south-side I-84 freeway, and on the north-side WA-14 can experience some of the scenic grandeur of the historic trail.

**Historical Summary:** The Columbia River provided a major fishery, trade and transportation route, and place of settlement for American Indian people for at least 10,000 years before the arrival of Europeans. In the 19th century, groups who regularly resided or fished along the river corridor included the Wasco, Wishram, and White Salmon peoples, who lived between the Cascade Mountains and The Dalles, Oregon; the Kickitats, Yakamas, Tyghs, and Teninos, with villages around The Dalles; and the Walla Wallas, Cayuses, and Umatillas farther east, between The Dalles and the Snake River confluence (Stern 1998:641; Walker 1998:ix; Klindt and Klindt 2011:10). Lewis and Clark encountered some of these groups and mapped this stretch of the Columbia in 1805, marveling at the abundance of salmon in the river and in the lodges of local villagers. Lewis estimated that "the natives inhabiting that noble stream...annually prepare about 30,000 pounds of pounded sammon for market." On the return trip the following year, Clark made particular note of the fishing villages around Celilo Falls, upstream from the present-day town of The Dalles. Perched on slim wooden platforms jutting out over the torrent, Indian fisherman from these villages netted and speared thousands of salmon as the migrating fish tried to leap



the waterfall. This resource-rich location formed the hub of a sophisticated aboriginal trade network that extended to the Rocky Mountain tribes east of the continental divide, west to the Pacific Coast, south to California, and north into British Columbia (Stern 1998:641-642). "This is the great mart of all this country," observed William Clark.

The business-savvy villagers controlled not only trade but also transportation along the river. Below the 20-foot plunge of Celilo Falls (also called The Chutes and The Great Falls of the Columbia) lay a 12-mile series of rapids collectively known to fur traders and emigrants as The Narrows and The Dalles.<sup>76</sup> Few travelers cared to test their paddling skills against the currents and whirlpools of that stretch of river. With the exception of Lewis and Clark's well-seasoned crew and a few daring others, most put ashore above Celilo Falls and portaged around the hazards, usually paying for the privilege and often hiring local Indian men to carry their boats and belongings.<sup>77</sup>

Encouraged by Lewis and Clark's reports about the region's resources and economic potential, Canadian and American fur traders appeared on the scene in 1811, and seven years later the North West Company established a trading post, Fort Nez Percés, on the Columbia River a half-mile north of the mouth of the Walla Walla River. Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) took over that operation in 1821 and rebuilt the post at the river confluence.<sup>78</sup> Over the following three decades, fur traders "used the river corridor as a conduit from Fort Nez Percés to Fort Vancouver" (Bassett et al. 1998:170). HBC traders also guided American missionaries into the area. By the mid- to late 1830s, missionaries at Waiilatpu (Whitman Mission, at today's Walla Walla, Washington), Wascopam (a Methodist mission located below Celilo Falls at the town of The Dalles, Oregon), and other sites were laboring to convert the native people to Christianity, treat their illnesses, and school their children.

In spring of 1840, before the Oregon emigration was truly underway, missionary Narcissa Whitman wrote in a letter to her mother, "A tide of immigration appears to be moving this way rapidly. What a few years will bring forth, we know not....We [at Waiilatpu] are emphatically situated on the highway between the States and the Columbia river, and are a resting place for the weary travelers...." (N. Whitman, May 1840, as quoted by Drury 1973a:425). Her assessment was correct.

The first party of overland emigrant families, consisting of 24 members of the Western Emigration Society who earlier had parted from the Bidwell-Bartleson Party below Fort Hall, paused at Whitman Mission/Waiilatpu on their way to the Columbia River in September 1841 (Drury 1973a:425). The mission became a recognized waystation on the Oregon Trail when Marcus Whitman, returning from a trip east, directed the first big emigrant wagon train there in 1843. The workload at Waiilatpu burgeoned as newly arrived overland emigrants increasingly looked to Dr. and Mrs. Whitman for travel assistance and advice, repairs, medical help, provisions, and sometimes room and board for the winter. In 1843 and 1844, virtually all Oregon Trail emigrants passed through the mission and continued west down the Walla Walla River to Fort Nez Percés on the Columbia River.

HBC employees at the fort helped the emigrants, too, by selling them goods and services and often interceding with local tribes on their behalf (Bassett et al. 1998:172). In addition, the traders tended

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<sup>76</sup> Father Pierre de Smet, a 19th century Jesuit priest and missionary, noted that "Dalle is an old French word, meaning a trough, and the name is given by the Canadian voyageurs [fur traders] to all contracted running waters, hemmed in by walls of rocks" (1847:214). The Wasco people called this great narrows Win-Quatt, meaning "surrounded by rock cliffs."

<sup>77</sup> Peter Burnett, of the 1843 "Great Migration" to Oregon, wrote that portage of an HBC bateau "required the united exertions of forty or fifty Indians," who would carry the boat on their shoulders (Burnett 1946:77). In 1862, a small "pufferbelly" steam engine named The Oregon Pony began portaging passengers and freight around the rapids. From the west end of the line, emigrants could resume their float or board a steamboat to Portland.

<sup>78</sup> The new HBC post at Wallula also became known as Fort Walla Walla; both names were in use by 1843. Today the site is more commonly called "Old Fort Walla Walla" to distinguish it from three later military posts, all also called Fort Walla Walla, located east of Whitman Mission.

## ***Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes***

emigrant livestock and wagons left with them over the winter for retrieval in the spring, and issued vouchers to emigrants who wished to trade for HBC cattle to be received downstream at the company's headquarters, Fort Vancouver. Some emigrants encamped around Fort Nez Percés for several days while building rafts, bartering for Indian canoes, or arranging to rent sturdy HBC bateaux for the river-ride to Wascopam at The Dalles. Overton Johnson and William Winter, part of the Great Migration of 1843, hired an Indian man at the fort to pilot their canoe. Johnson and Winter (1906:97-98) described their trip down the Upper Columbia River thus:

The River, up and down from [Fort Nez Percés], as far as we could see, was broad and smooth, and we promised ourselves an agreeable passage, but we soon found that it was full of rocks, whirlpools, and dangerous rapids, to follow through which in safety required the greatest exertion, watchfulness and care. Our minds were constantly filled with anxiety and dread.... We passed on to what is called the Chutes, through many dangerous Rapids, to have accomplished which would have been very impracticable without skilful guidance. Here the river is wide, full of large rocks standing out of the water, and falls several feet. We were compelled to make a portage of nearly a mile over the rocks and sand, carrying our canoes and baggage on our shoulders. Three miles below the Chutes are the Little Dales [Dalles], where the River runs three hundred yards through a narrow channel, between high rocks. Here we made another portage of our baggage and smallest canoe, and with some difficulty hired the Indians to run the others through the rugged Canon. A few miles further and we came to the Great Dales [Dalles], where we were compelled to leave our smallest canoe, and again make a portage of our baggage a distance of one and a half miles, over the rocks. Here the whole Columbia runs through a Canon not more than seventy feet wide, whirling and boiling in a most furious manner, running with terrible velocity, and chafing against its rugged, rocky wall, and it requires the most dexterous management, which these [Indian pilots] are masters of, to pass the dreadful chasm in safety. A single stroke amiss would be inevitable destruction.

Johnson and Winter witnessed a near tragedy when one of their party's canoes struck a submerged rock a short distance below Fort Nez Percés. The two passengers, dumped into the furious flow, managed to climb onto a rock and were saved by the Indian man piloting Johnson and Winter's boat. Eventually, all reached safety at the settlement of The Dalles, about 125 miles below the HBC trading post.

Others were not so fortunate. Explorer John C. Fremont, arriving at Fort Nez Percés while scouting the Oregon Trail in 1843, wrote of finding Jesse Applegate's emigrant party there, busily building rafts to carry them down river. Continuing along the riverbank, Fremont's expedition was passed a few days later by Applegate's "fleet of boats, which suddenly came gliding swiftly down the broad river" (Fremont, in Jackson and Spence 1970:554-555). A week later, the explorer learned that one of the rafts had been lost above The Dalles mission, drowning a man and two nine-year-old Applegate cousins. According to survivors, their raft had been sucked successively into two different whirlpools above Celilo Falls; neither the victims' bodies nor the raft were ever recovered (Applegate 1934:119-129).

Those who feared the river did have a (mostly) dry land alternative between Fort Nez Percés and The Dalles. Between the HBC fort and the mouth of the Deschutes River, a rough, narrow livestock track followed the south bank of the river. This track had been used by people who wanted to drive their cattle, by horseback or on foot, through to the Willamette Valley instead of trading them to HBC at the fort. Unlike the Applegate family, Peter Burnett, and Johnson and Winter, a number of 1843 emigrants decided to try driving their wagons along that livestock path rather than risk their lives on the river (Elliott 1915:149). This option, while safer, was not ideal, for the trail traversed steep embankments and was studded with sharp rocks and patches of deep, loose sand. In at least two places the canyon narrowed, forcing travelers into the river for a distance (Bagley 2010:232). In addition, wagons had to ford the mouths of numerous tributaries that emptied into the Columbia, including China Creek and the Umatilla, John Day, and Deschutes rivers, which all could be dangerous—though not as dangerous as dodging rocks in the rapids—at times of high flow.

Upon reaching the confluence of the Deschutes and the Columbia a short distance upstream from Celilo Falls, emigrants could attempt the ford or pay Indian ferrymen to carry their wagons across the Deschutes River on canoes (e.g., Nesmith 1906). From there they had to climb the riverside bluffs, angling southwesterly over the plateau, and descend again to the Columbia River near the Wascopam Mission at The Dalles. Oregon historian T.C. Elliott (1915:150) credited the 1843 emigrants with pioneering that section of wagon trail, too, noting that the riverside track between the Deschutes River and The Dalles was not passable to wagons “and was never so used.”

Between 1841 and 1845, The Dalles was the end of the overland route of the Oregon Trail. From there, everyone had to continue by river. Researchers Klindt and Klindt (2011:33–34) explain,

At Rowena, seven miles west of The Dalles, the bluffs closed in on the river, making further passage by wagon impossible. Only single-file tracks went over the mountains, barely passable to cattle and pack animals, but not to emigrants bringing tools and supplies to begin a new life in the Willamette Valley. Here [near the mouth of Chenoweth Creek on Crate’s Point, a few miles below town of The Dalles] the majority would build large rough rafts on which they could load their wagons and float to the next rapids.

The emigrants of 1841–1844, then, had limited choices. All traveled from the foot of the Blue Mountains north to Whitman Mission/Waiilatpu. All followed the Walla Walla River west to HBC’s Fort Nez Percés/Fort Walla Walla. All followed the Columbia southwesterly, either by water or via the shoreline livestock and wagon trail, to The Dalles; and there, all put into the river except the men who chose to drive their cattle through the Cascade Mountains to the Willamette Valley.

However, emigrants gradually gained more choices as the Oregon Trail continued to evolve. In 1845, instead of crossing the Umatilla River and continuing north to Whitman Mission, emigrants began following the Umatilla to its confluence with the Columbia. From there they proceeded down the Columbia to The Dalles. (See the following entry for “Umatilla River Route & Columbia River to The Dalles.”) This option cut miles of their travel, but in 1847, Whitman himself whittled the mileage further by extending the cutoff from the Umatilla River due west across the Columbia Plateau to The Dalles (Drury 1973b:193; Beckham 2013:F-51). This trail, known today as the Columbia Plateau Route, bypassed the Upper Columbia River Route (except that short segment of wagon trail from the mouth of the Deschutes River) and delivered travelers and their wagons directly to The Dalles. Now no one had to take his chances on the Columbia River between Fort Nez Percés and Wascopam Mission.

Other alternatives soon opened that allowed travelers to avoid all travel on the Columbia River. These include the 1845 Meek Cutoff across the deserts of eastern Oregon; the 1846 Barlow Road, which carried traffic from The Dalles around the south flank of Mt. Hood; and the 1846 Applegate Trail/Southern Route to Oregon, which led emigrants across Nevada’s Black Rock Desert and then north through Southern Oregon. Even these options, however, did not cause total abandonment of the Upper Columbia River Route. A few emigrants in need of assistance continued to follow the original route to Whitman Mission until the mission was destroyed in 1847. That act helped trigger a regional war between the Cayuse Indians and white settlers, shutting down traffic past the mission for several years. Limited emigrant use of the route past Whitman Mission to Fort Nez Percés resumed in 1853, as travelers used the old trail to reach the newly opened Naches Pass trail through Washington’s Cascade Mountains.

Unruh (1979:84) estimates Oregon traffic for 1840–1844 at about 2,500 emigrants. By his accounting, another 7,700 people traveled overland to Oregon between 1845 and 1847, when Whitman Mission was destroyed and the Upper Columbia River Route was abandoned. Based on Unruh’s numbers, then, a range of 2,500 to 3,000 travelers is a reasonable estimate for total emigrant traffic to the Whitman Mission and down the Upper Columbia River Route between 1840 and 1847.

**Conclusion:** In sum, the Upper Columbia River Route was part of the original Oregon Trail from the Blue Mountains, past Whitman Mission and Fort Nez Percés, to The Dalles. The earliest covered wagon emigrants to the Oregon Country followed this route. At the confluence of the Walla Walla River with the

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

Columbia River, emigrants could board rafts or bateaux for a hazardous float trip to The Dalles, or they could proceed down a narrow, rough trail along the river's south shore. The river run, in particular, was a significant part of the Oregon Trail experience, and one in which a number of people lost their lives. Several other trails were developed (e.g., the Meek Cutoff, Barlow Road, and the Applegate Trail) specifically to provide an alternative to the dangerous river and the delays that sometimes arose as emigrants tried to procure boats and rafts. Today both the original river channel and most of the trail along the river's edge are submerged by a series of large reservoirs on the Columbia River, but several related sites of interest to trail visitors still exist. These include associated wagon ruts, natural landmarks, and the scenery of the Columbia River Gorge. Documentary evidence indicates that this route carried up to 3,000 emigrants between 1840 and late November 1847, when it was largely abandoned. After opening of the Naches Pass Road in 1853, approximately 400 more emigrants may have used a variant of the Upper Columbia River Route to reach Fort Nez Percés.

Designation of the Upper Columbia River Route would add 166 new miles to the National Trails System.

**54. Umatilla River Route.** This 15.5-mile route follows the Umatilla River from Echo, Oregon, to its confluence with the Columbia River at Umatilla, where it joins the Upper Columbia River Route. By launching their rafts there, emigrants avoided some rough stretches of river that they would have encountered if they had put into the Columbia River upstream at Fort Nez Percés.

**Route Description:** The Umatilla River Route branches off the already designated Columbia Plateau Route of the Oregon National Historic Trail at Echo, Oregon. Whereas the designated trail crosses the Umatilla River and continues west to The Dalles, this variant turns north at Echo and starts downstream along the east bank of the Umatilla River. West of Stanfield, where the river begins a broad bend to the west and north, the variant cuts overland and parallels US 395 to Hermiston. There it crosses US-395 to rejoin the Umatilla River about a mile northwest of town. The study route then follows that stream, approximating the alignment of the old highway between Hermiston and Umatilla, to its confluence with the Columbia River, where the Umatilla River Route meets the Upper Columbia River Route. Emigrants could launch rafts down the Columbia from the vicinity of today's Umatilla Marina, or they could join the riverside wagon track to The Dalles.

Because the Umatilla River Route branches off the designated Oregon NHT instead of from the Whitman Mission study route, it could be designated regardless of the status of the Whitman Mission route.

**Historical Assets:** The small community of Echo, where this study route branches away from the currently designated NHT, includes an NPS- certified Oregon Trail interpretive site. Hat Rock was a landmark on the Lewis and Clark Trail, and wagon trails once crossed the area now occupied by Hat Rock State Park at present-day Umatilla, Oregon.

**Historical Summary:** In 1845, Methodist missionary Elijah White advised emigrants that, instead of crossing the Umatilla River and turning north to Whitman Mission after emerging from the Blue Mountains, they might turn west and follow the Umatilla directly to its confluence with the Columbia. Emigrants could proceed down the Columbia from there and then replenish their supplies at the Wascopam Methodist mission at The Dalles. By bypassing Whitman Mission and Fort Nez Percés and making their purchases at Wascopam, emigrants would save both miles and money (Drury 1973b:137). These advantages made the Umatilla River Route "the primary route of the Oregon Trail until 1847" (Beckham 2013:F-51).

Like those who traveled the Upper Columbia River Route via Whitman Mission and Fort Nez Percés, emigrants who followed the Umatilla River to its mouth still had to take the Columbia River to The Dalles. They could do so by rafting the rapids or by turning down the rough livestock-and-wagon track that ran along the riverbank. The emigrant experience along that stretch of the Columbia River is described in the Upper Columbia River Route entry, above.

Unruh (1979:84) estimates that some 7,700 people traveled overland to Oregon between 1845, when emigrants began following the Umatilla River to its confluence with the Columbia, and 1847, when the new overland Plateau route opened. Most of them probably used the Umatilla River route to the Columbia and thence to The Dalles.

**Conclusion:** In sum, the Umatilla River Route to the Columbia River was the “primary route of the Oregon Trail” between 1845 and 1847, carrying approximately 7,700 emigrants. Trail-related places of historical interest exist at Echo and Umatilla.

Designation of the Umatilla River variant would add 15 new miles to the Oregon NHT and the National Trails System.

**55. Naches Pass Trail.** The 247-mile Naches Pass Trail study route begins at the Hudson’s Bay Company’s Fort Nez Percés Lake Wallula on the Columbia River, and trends northwesterly to cross the Cascade Mountains at Naches Pass. The trail ends at Fort Steilacoom, south of Tacoma, Washington. The Naches Pass Trail is under consideration for addition to the Oregon National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** Because this study route branches off the Whitman Mission feasibility study route at Fort Nez Percés/Old Fort Walla Walla, it can be designated only if the Whitman Mission Route is designated, as well. Otherwise, its leading end would not connect to the Oregon NHT.

From Old Fort Walla Walla, near present-day Wallula, Washington, the Naches Pass route angles north across today’s Lake Wallula, a reservoir on the Columbia. It emerges on the west bank to follow the river through Kennewick to the mouth of the Yakima River. The route turns to follow the south bank of the Yakima River, passing opposite of Richland, Washington, for about 16 miles to a tight river-bend called The Horn. It crosses the Yakima River there and goes northwesterly across Hanford Nuclear Reservation/Cold Creek Valley, paralleling WA-240 for 19 miles.<sup>79</sup> Next it passes north of the Rattlesnake Hills and then follows Cold Creek westerly across the Yakima Training Center. From there the route continues west between Umptanum Ridge and Yakima Ridge and descends the bluffs to the Yakima River north of East Selah, Washington. It follows Wenas Creek northwest for about 20 miles and then turns west to enter Snoqualmie National Forest. The route descends to the Naches River near the mouth of Benton Creek.

The study route continues northwest up the Naches River, paralleling the Kittitas/Yakima county line and WA-410 past Cliffdell and skirting the foothills surrounding Mt. Rainier. Above the mouth of the American River, the Naches becomes the Little Naches River. There the study route roughly coincides with a jeep track going upstream and over the Cascade Mountains at Naches Pass. The route continues along the jeep track as it passes down a ridge to Greenwater River and then follows that stream west along the King/Pierce County Line. The route leaves the national forest, still following the river, and reaches the confluence of the Greenwater and White Rivers at the community of Greenwater. Now the study route descends the White River, crossing through Federation Forest State Park. One mile east of the mouth of the Clearwater River, the trail climbs out of the river canyon and crosses the highlands north of Mud Mountain Lake. Descending again to the river, the trail passes south of Pinnacle Peak and Enumclaw, crosses WA-410, and fords the White River three miles northwest of Buckley. Here the trail leaves the White River. It continues west through Bonney Lake and crosses the Puyallup River near Alderton. It next passes south of Puyallup, fords Clover Creek, and crosses Spanaway Park and McChord Air Force Base. Finally, the route crosses I-5, passes between Steilacoom and Gravelly lakes, and ends at historic Fort Steilacoom in Lakewood, Wash.

**Historical Assets:** Preliminary studies indicate that original trail segments exist approaching the site of Old Fort Walla Walla, near the Horn above the Yakima River, in Hanford Reach National Monument,

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<sup>79</sup> Much of the Hanford Nuclear Reservation has been incorporated into the Hanford Reach National Monument. The trail traverses the western edge of the national monument.

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

and in the Yakima Firing Center and across the Cascades. A popular jeep trail and snowmobiling trail, managed by the US Forest Service, approximates and in some places overlies the route of the 1853 Longmire Wagon Train through the Cascade Mountains. The area is also open to hiking and equestrian use. Along the jeep trail, near the location of the cliff from which the Longmire party lowered its wagons, stands a historical marker that provides information about the 1853 wagon crossing; nearby is a tree with rope scars thought to be from the wagon-lowering procedure. The Government Meadows area, which is transected by the route, is a popular snowmobiling area. No intact trail remnants are extant there, but there is a historical sign telling of the wagon trail. Possible wagon swales do exist, though, along the Little Naches River. The historic “Meeker Mansion” in Puyallup is the home of Oregon and Washington pioneer Ezra Meeker, who in 1854 traveled east over the Naches Pass Trail to assist a stranded wagon train and later famously promoted the marking and preservation of the Oregon Trail. Historic Fort Steilacoom, at the west end of the route, today is a park operated by a non-profit historical organization. It retains several historic buildings and offers tours and interpretation.

**Historical Summary:** The Cascade Mountain range divides Washington State, forming a barrier to wagon travel between the dry inland and the verdant Puget Sound and coastal areas. During the overland trails era of the mid-1800s, that barrier helped discourage settlement of western Washington. The easiest way across the Cascades was by boat through the Columbia River Gorge, which had been cut by the catastrophic Bonneville Flood at the end of the last Ice Age about 15,000 years ago. Most travelers who followed the Columbia to Oregon’s Willamette Valley were content to settle in the region. Those few who wanted to reach the Puget Sound typically overwintered in the valley, then the following spring started north on the difficult, final leg of their journey up the Cowlitz River. The trip north at times entailed canoeing the river and at other times involved marching along a rough and muddy trail. Another option for those wishing to settle farther north was to follow the Columbia River to its mouth and then board a ship to the Puget Sound – an uncomfortable and hazardous trip for emigrants who reached Oregon in October or later (Johnson and Larsen 2014a:70).

By 1850, the issue of whether the United States or Britain would control the Puget Sound country had been settled, but American control of the region was tenuous. Only a handful of settlements existed in the entire Puget basin and the total population of the region was small. The Puget Sound Agricultural Company, a subsidiary of the Hudson’s Bay Company, was still a dominant presence in the area. American settlers felt an urgent need to increase their numbers in order to secure US control. To do that, they had to find a direct way to bring overland emigrants off the main trail in eastern Oregon, across the Cascades, and into the Puget Sound country. Of the 12 passes through the Cascade Mountains, four are lower than 4,988-foot Naches Pass. However, Naches provided the most direct route to the Puget Sound from the Oregon Trail along the Columbia River, so it was selected for the new wagon road (Robinson 1988).

Naches Pass was already part of a long-established travel route. In ancient times, American Indians had worn a footpath through the mountains as they traveled between the Columbia Plateau and the Puget Sound. By 1840, fur trappers were using the trail to travel between Hudson’s Bay Company trading posts at Old Fort Walla Walla on the Columbia River and Fort Nisqually at DuPont, Washington. A few other white travelers and exploratory parties crossed that way in the 1840s, and a group of Puget Sound settlers attempted to build a road along the route in 1850 but soon gave up.

In January 1853, Congress created Washington Territory (formerly the northwestern quarter of Oregon Territory) and appropriated \$20,000 for the construction of a military road between military Fort Walla Walla (not to be confused with the Hudson’s Bay Company trading post known as Old Fort Walla Walla) and Fort Steilacoom via Naches Pass. The money, however, could not be disbursed in time to have the road ready for use by that year’s emigration. Taking matters into their own hands, the businessmen of Olympia, Washington Territory, in July 1853 collected \$2,000, provisions, tools, and draft animals, and sent out crews to hack a road through rugged terrain and dense forests to the eastern slopes of the Cascades. By October, the work crews had opened a rough, incomplete pack trail through the mountains before returning home for the winter (Johnson and Larsen 2014b:120).

Meanwhile, a 171-member wagon company from Indiana started out from Old Fort Walla Walla, at the confluence of the Walla Walla and Columbia rivers, to try the new mountain road they had heard about. Upon reaching the eastern flank of the Cascades in mid-September, the party searched fruitlessly for a wagon road but found only the pack trail. The emigrants headed their wagons into the mountains, clearing the road as best they could along the way. Passage through the thick, old growth forest was difficult, and in one place the emigrants found their way to be blocked by a fallen tree 12 feet in diameter. They could neither pass around nor over it, so they burrowed a wagon-sized tunnel beneath the enormous log. At another location, the emigrants lowered their wagons down a high cliff, purportedly using a rope made from the hides of oxen killed on site for that purpose, although some historians doubt that aspect of the story (Johnson and Larsen 2014b:121-122; Egan 2016:58-69).

After 34 days on the rugged Naches Pass Trail, and with the help of a relief party bearing supplies from the settlements, the company straggled in to its destination (Robinson 1988). Because James Longmire's diary describes the travails of that journey—including crossing the Naches River 64 times, following a narrow ridge with no room to turn around, and using rawhide ropes to lower 53 wagons over a cliff—that company is known today as the Longmire Wagon Train. A second group, the William Mitchell Party, followed their trail later that year. Those emigrants, crossing the Cascades in November and believing they would encounter deep snow, stowed their wagons at a mission in Yakima and packed over the pass (Blankenship 1914). The last recorded emigration-related wagon traffic on the Naches Pass Trail consisted of several small parties, totaling approximately 50 emigrants, in 1854.

By that time the congressional appropriation was spent, with little road improvement to show for the expense (Bancroft and Victor 1890). Uncompleted, the rough trail fell into disuse and saw no emigrant use at all during the regional conflicts of 1855–1856.<sup>80</sup> After the wars, Indian lands in Eastern Washington were taken up by ranchers who then used the Naches Pass Trail to drive livestock and turkeys to the Puget Sound markets. In the early 20th century, much of the trail's route through the Cascade Mountains came under Forest Service management, and in 1909 the Service reopened the covered wagon trail to allow access for fire suppression. The wagon trail later became a jeep trail and today is a designated four-wheel driveway and snowmobile route (US Forest Service 1988).

**Conclusion:** In sum, the Naches Pass Trail was used by four documented emigrant parties and several others that merged and separated, making an exact count difficult to obtain. The largest of the known parties, the Longmire Wagon Train, had 171 members; the 1854 parties had approximately 50 members; and total documented emigration over the route is fewer than 400 individuals. A query of OCTA's COED database on the terms "Naches" or "Natch" identified six records with mentions of Naches Pass (including variant spellings); however, this figure was not used to estimate total emigration traffic over the route because the actual number can be closely approximated from historical documentation. Some of the emigrants who arrived in the Puget Sound area via Naches Pass are of regional historical prominence. They include James Longmire, who was instrumental in the development of Mount Rainier National Park; Winfield Scott Ebey, who settled at what is now Ebey's Landing National Historic Preserve on Whidbey Island, Wash.; Theodore Winthrop, who wrote a widely read book, *Canoe and Saddle*, about his 1853 travels over the Naches Pass Trail; and George Himes, an 1853 Naches Pass Trail emigrant who later assumed a leadership position with the Oregon Pioneer Association and then the Oregon Historical Society. Trail-related places of historical interest along this route include the Fort Walla Walla Museum, US Forest Service snowmobiling and jeep trails along the pioneer route through the Cascades, and Historic Fort Steilacoom.

Designation of the Naches Pass Trail would add 247 new miles to the Oregon National Historic Trail and to the National Trails System.

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<sup>80</sup> These were the Yakima and Puget Sound wars, involving many of the tribes of Eastern Washington and the Cascade Mountains who were resisting the loss of their lands to settlers.

**56. Cutoff to the Barlow Road.** A short distance west of the John Day River, the Cutoff to the Barlow Road branches off the designated Plateau Route of the Oregon Trail toward Tygh Valley, Oregon. There it connects to the Barlow Road (also designated NHT) around Mount Hood. The 56-mile cutoff is under consideration for addition to the Oregon National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** About two miles west of the Oregon Trail crossing of the John Day River in Oregon, the Cutoff to the Barlow Road study route heads west, following the high ground north of Grass Valley Canyon, and crosses OR-206 five miles southeast of Wasco, Oregon. It continues southwest through Grass Valley Canyon and crosses US 97 at the town of Grass Valley, then parallels the east side of the Deschutes River, at a distance of about five miles, to the head of Kerr Canyon. There the route turns west along a ridge between Kerr and Willow canyons and descends to Buck Hollow, which it follows north to a crossing of the Deschutes River. From there the route continues west for another eight miles to Tygh Creek, where it joins the Barlow Road.

**Historical Assets:** Along the route are interpretive signs in and near Arlington, Oregon; the Sherman County Historical Museum at Moro, Oregon, and possible wagon swales in that vicinity; trail ruts, visible from OR-216, that descend Hollenbeck Point; interpretive signs at Sherars Falls; the old wagon crossing on the Deschutes River; a signed auto tour from the John Day River Crossing to Tygh Valley; and the Deschutes River Scenic Waterway. A large sign for the cutoff stands in Grass Valley, and trail remnants are visible from US 26 at Sherars Grade, southeast of Grass Valley.

**Historical Summary:** The Barlow Road was developed in 1846 as an alternative to descending the Columbia River from The Dalles, Oregon, by boat. The first emigrants to follow the new toll road turned south from The Dalles along an Indian trail to Tygh Valley and from there took the Barlow Road around the south flank of Mount Hood to Oregon City. The Cutoff to Barlow Road, evidently in use by 1847, branched off the Columbia Plateau Route a short distance beyond the John Day River and headed directly southwest to Tygh Valley, avoiding The Dalles and reducing travel time by as much as a week. First mention of the cutoff appears in the 1848 diary of emigrant Riley Root, and thereafter “the Cutoff was used extensively by Oregon trail emigrants” (Bassett et al. 1998:219).

Some travelers complained of the scarcity of water and firewood along stretches of the cutoff, but the terrain itself was unchallenging until the trail reached the chasm of the deep, swift Deschutes River. There, wagons faced a steep descent, a difficult wagon ford, and a hard climb back out of the gorge.

Some of the earliest emigrants to reach the river caulked their wagon boxes to use as rafts to float their possessions across, and some rigged a rope and pulley system to haul their wagons over the water, but ferries and toll bridges (which repeatedly washed out) soon were in place. Passage was not inexpensive by 19th century standards: an 1866 emigrant reported paying \$7.75 to use the bridge (Bassett et al. 1998:220). Upon reaching the Barlow Road, a notoriously difficult trail due to mud and lack of feed for the draft animals, emigrants were asked to pay a \$5 toll to continue to the Willamette Valley.

Sam Barlow counted 152 wagons (approximately 760 persons) using his new toll road during its opening season, before this cutoff was established (Grauer 1975:20). Mary S. Barlow (1902:79) claims that at least two-thirds of the Oregon emigration followed the Barlow Road in 1846 and the years thereafter. Unruh’s (1979:84, 85) estimates put the total Oregon migration from 1847 (when the cutoff was established) through 1860 at about 46,850 persons. Two-thirds of that total, then, would put traffic on the Barlow Road (but not necessarily the Cutoff to the Barlow Road) at roughly 31,000 emigrants. The volume of emigrant traffic on the Cutoff to the Barlow Road is difficult to estimate because few travelers bothered to note their use of the route. A query of OCTA’s COED database identified no records that mention by name the Barlow Road or its cutoff. Mattes (1988), however, summarizes 47 emigrant records from 1847 through 1866 that mention the Barlow Road by name and another 11 that report passage “over the Cascades” or “through the mountains,” evidently an indirect reference to the Barlow Road. Of the total 58, Mattes shows that 15 writers went all the way to The Dalles (bypassing the cutoff) before turning south to the Barlow Road. They did so in order to ship their belongings ahead by river, thereby reducing their load over the difficult Barlow Road segment, or to purchase supplies or to



overwinter at The Dalles before continuing on. Only one record shows conclusively that the writer took the cutoff beyond the John Day River crossing; the route taken by the remaining writers to reach the Barlow Road could not be ascertained from the information provided by Mattes. Clearly, though, it cannot be assumed that most travelers chose the shorter route, the Cutoff to the Barlow Road, for there were good reasons to go to The Dalles before starting on that final leg of the trip.

The journal of emigrant Riley Root indicates that the cutoff to the Barlow Road was plainly visible in 1848 where it branched off the primary Oregon Trail (Bassett et al. 1998:219); and emigrant Esther Belle McMillan Hanna made note of the split in 1852, as well. Based on these observations and the information provided by Mattes, it appears that the cutoff, though perhaps not heavily traveled, did carry traffic regularly between 1847 and 1853, inclusive. The Oregon State Historic Preservation Office states that it possesses historic records showing “diary entries from emigrants in the 1860s that suggest the cutoff remained a significant short-cut throughout the main period of Oregon Trail use” (R. Curtis, personal communication, 09/30/2014).

**Conclusion:** In sum, the Cutoff to the Barlow Road was opened 1847, was regularly used between 1847 and 1843, and evidently carried traffic into the 1860s. The Barlow Road itself was used well into the 20th century, and modern, paved highways today retrace its route, but the use history of the cutoff itself is not well known. The volume of traffic on the Barlow Road has been estimated as high as 31,000 emigrants, and some of these reached the toll road by way of the cutoff, although an unknown number may have taken the original, longer route through The Dalles. Numerous trail-related places of historical interest, primarily markers, historical signs, and limited trail trace, are available along the cutoff.

Designation of the Cutoff to the Barlow Road would add 56 new miles to the Oregon National Historic Trail and to the National Trails System.

**57. Cowlitz River Route.** This 118-mile water and overland route begins at Fort Vancouver, Washington, and descends the Columbia River to the mouth of the Cowlitz River at Longview, Washington. From there, the Cowlitz River study route continues up the River to Cowlitz Landing and then crosses overland to Tumwater, Washington, where the route ends. It is under study for the Oregon National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** Emigrants could travel by boat from Fort Vancouver along the Columbia River to its confluence with the Cowlitz River, located south of Longview and Kelso, Washington. To reach the Puget Sound in today’s Washington State, they turned north up the Cowlitz River, traveling either on foot or by Indian canoe. At Cowlitz Landing, southwest of Toledo, those in canoes left the river because the current was too strong to continue paddling upstream. Emigrants proceeded north overland across the Cowlitz Prairie and past the location of today’s Mount St. Helens Visitor Center. The trail crosses US 12 at Marys Corner, goes over Jackson Prairie, and intersects the Newaukum River. It passes through Chehalis and Centralia and continues north to Grand Mound. From there the route swings northeast, crossing I-5 and Grand Mound Prairie to reach Tenino, Wash. Next the route turns north to strike the Deschutes River west of Fort Lewis Military Reservation. It then continues northwesterly to Tumwater (historically, New Market), Washington, where the route ends.

**Historical Assets:** Trail-related places of historical interest to visitors along this route include Fort Vancouver National Historic Site; a short trail remnant (McNulty) on private property north of the historic Cowlitz Landing; John R. Jackson House, one of the oldest pioneer homes (built in 1848) north of the Columbia River and a stopover for overland emigrants at Jackson Prairie, southeast of Chehalis; a marker, located south of Tumwater, commemorating 1845 African American settler George Bush; the 1860s Joseph Borst Home and nearby river ford in Centralia; and historic Crosby House (1858) and Tumwater Historic Park in Tumwater, Wash. Faint evidence of the trail is still visible on private ground at Chain Hill, southwest of the Fort Lewis Military Reserve, and at Scatter Creek, near Sunnydale, Wash. About 40 miles northeast of Olympia is the “Meeker Mansion,” home of Oregon and Washington pioneer

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

Ezra Meeker, who emigrated via the Cowlitz River Route and later famously promoted the marking and preservation of the old Oregon Trail. No trace of the Cowlitz Landing is extant, and most of the original trail heading north has been destroyed by road construction and other development. However, trails researchers Chuck and Suzanne Hornbuckle and Washington State Parks personnel have identified original trail remnants through Lewis and Clark State Park, located north of the Cowlitz Landing locale at Toledo and just south of the John Jackson home, south of US 12. In 2002, Hornbuckle published an auto tour guide to the trail. He has received 17 letters of support from officials of the State of Washington and various historical organizations that support signing of an auto tour route for the trail, but the Washington Department of Transportation cannot install road signs unless the route is officially designated as a state or national historic trail.

**Historical Summary:** The Cowlitz River Route originally was an American Indian trade route between the Cowlitz River and the Puget Sound area in present-day Washington State. Hudson's Bay Company traders began using the route in the 1830s to conduct business with native peoples, and by 1840 a "well marked trail" extended from the Cowlitz River to the Sound (Sir James Douglas, as quoted in Hornbuckle 2004:74). A wagon trail was opened along the route in 1845 (Scott 1924) and the "Cowlitz Trail" soon became the main north-south conduit for emigrant traffic between the Columbia River and the Puget Sound area (Echtle 2012; McClelland 1953).

Emigrant John R. Jackson, one of those credited with opening the trail for wagon use, traveled over the southern part of the Cowlitz River Route in 1845 before establishing his home on the prairie divide between the Cowlitz and Chehalis river basins. John and Matilda Jackson's home and later inn, general store, and post office became a well-known stopping place for emigrants on the trail. Also in 1845, the Simmons-Bush Party was first to drive wagons from Cowlitz Landing to the southern tip of the Puget Sound (site of New Market, now Tumwater). Among that 32-member party was George Bush, a free African American emigrant and former Hudson's Bay Company trapper who had brought his family west to Oregon in 1844. Despite being a highly regarded leader of men, Bush was prohibited by Oregon's harsh black exclusion laws from settling south of the Columbia River, so the entire Simmons-Bush party, which included both black and white emigrants, voted unanimously to continue north up the Cowlitz the following year (Hornbuckle 2004:74; Moore 2012:141). It took them 15 days of travel to reach their destination, the mouth of the Deschutes River at the south end of the Puget Sound. They were the first American emigrants to settle permanently north of the Columbia River, with the permission of the Hudson's Bay Company, in what was then British-controlled country (Hornbuckle 2004). The Bush family homesteaded 640 acres on Bush Prairie at today's Tumwater and opened the region's first gristmill and sawmill.

More emigrants followed after the Oregon Treaty between the US and Britain accorded the lands south of the 49th parallel to the United States in 1846.

Historian Harvey W. Scott, himself an Oregon emigrant of 1852, wrote that "wagons, families, and goods were transported up the Cowlitz in canoes." However, he continued,

Even if the traveler had money to pay his fare by canoe on the Cowlitz River, he could not be sure of getting a seat in a canoe, for usually the travelers were either too few or too many, and the canoes were apt to be overloaded or to have no load at all; so there was nothing for it but to wait for days together or push on by foot. This last, most persons did; for they who were seeking Puget Sound in those times had no fear of fatigue or hardship, and it suited the means of most to walk rather than to ride.

(Scott 1924:48-49)

Ezra Meeker, who later became widely known for his work to preserve the remnants of the Oregon Trail, likewise emigrated by this route in 1852, sending his wife by canoe while he traveled by land. In his reminiscences, Meeker wrote:

The facts are, this road [the Cowlitz trail]...‘just grewed,’ and so gradually became a highway. One could scarcely say when the trail ceased to be simply a trail and the road actually be called a road. First, only saddle trains could pass. On the back of a still jointed, hard trotting, slow walking, contrary mule I was initiated into the secret depths of the mud holes of this trail. And such mud holes! It became a standing joke after the road was opened that a team would stall with an empty wagon going down hill....

(Meeker 1905:159)

The influx of American emigrants over the Cowlitz River Route increased when Washington became a US territory in 1853. That year, emigrant Henry Winsor established a canoe and bateau transport business on the Columbia and Cowlitz rivers in anticipation of a flood of travelers moving to the Puget Sound area. (Also in 1853, a competing route over Naches Pass was opened, but it was short-lived.) In 1854, Winsor offered horse rentals at Cowlitz Landing so emigrants would not have to walk the remaining distance to the settlements. The same year, the family of Washington Territory’s new governor, Isaac I. Stevens, traveled by ship to Portland, Oregon, continued by steamboat down the Columbia, and then boarded a wagon at Cowlitz Landing for the last leg of their journey to Olympia (Hornbuckle 2004:76). The governor’s wife, Meg Stevens, later wrote, “Surely there were no worse roads to be found in the world.”

Greatly concerned about the inadequate roads in Washington Territory, Governor Stevens in 1854–1855 lobbied Congress for funding to build or improve three major transportation routes in the territory, including a road from Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River to Fort Steilacoom on the Puget Sound. In February 1855, Congress authorized \$30,000 to build such a road to facilitate military travel between the two forts. The segment from Cowlitz Landing north to Fort Steilacoom was completed in 1857, and as more funding became available, additional sections were completed from the landing south to the Columbia River (McClelland 1953).

The military road purportedly “served as the only method of land travel from the time of its completion in 1861 until the railroad was finished in 1872” (McClelland 1953:18), but wagons did continue to roll from Cowlitz Landing to Olympia for many years. By the 1870s travelers could reach the Puget Sound by train, and today I-5 follows the general route of the Cowlitz Trail (Hornbuckle 2004:77).

Evans-Hatch (2004c) name seven emigrants, including the Simmons-Bush and Stevens parties, who left written accounts of the journey. A search of OCTA’s COED database identified four additional emigrant journals that mention the Cowlitz route; and Ezra Meeker and his wife and the Stevens family are known to have traveled that way. Utilizing Mattes’ (1988) ratio of 250 emigrants per record places an estimated 3,000 emigrants on the route during the overland trails era.

**Conclusion:** In sum, the volume of emigration traffic on the Cowlitz River Route, the primary distributor trail into the Puget Sound area, is estimated at about 3,000 travelers. The first emigrants to the Puget Sound area traveled this way in 1845, and by the late 1850s an improved military road carried emigrant traffic along the route. Most of the original trail north from the Cowlitz River is now under modern roads and railroad grades or has been eradicated by other development, but a few short stretches of wagon trail are visible on private property. Other historical assets associated with the route are markers and historic homes built by settlers near the trail.

Designation of the Cowlitz River Route would add 118 new miles to the Oregon National Historic Trail and to the National Trails System.

**58. Yreka Trail.** This 101.5-mile gold rush trail branches off the Applegate Trail/Southern Route to Oregon southwest of Lower Klamath Lake, just south of the Oregon/California border, and goes westerly to Yreka, California. It is under consideration for addition to the California National Historic Trail.

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

**Route Description:** The Yreka Trail branches off the Applegate Trail/Southern Route to Oregon at Willow Creek, south of Lower Klamath Lake, California. The trail follows Willow Creek south along the west foot of Mount Dome to Willow Springs and then angles southwest to skirt the southern end of Coyote Ridge.

From this point, the original 1852 wagon trail heads southwest and then west across Red Rock Valley to Deyarmie Lake, a playa that is usually dry. Continuing southwest, the trail skirts the northwest foot of Cedar Mountain, climbs the steep Jump Off Joe ascent to bench north of Round Valley, and crosses Butte Creek south of Orr Mountain.

A later route, opened in 1854, heads west from Coyote Ridge to cross Red Rock Valley on Red Rock Road, paralleling the original route about a mile to the north. The trail passes south of Sheep Mountain and leaves Red Rock Road to continue west to Rattlesnake Butte. It next follows Butte Creek south along the foot of Mt. Hebron for five miles and meets the 1852 original route north of Orr Mountain.

The route continues south on Butte Creek, passing between Orr Mountain and a steep spur of Mount Hebron near Orr Lake. Upon emerging from the canyon, the trail turns west to Grass Lake and turns south around Sheep Rock to Sheep Rock Springs. From there the Yreka Trail heads northwest to Cedar Lake and crosses Shasta Valley to the Shasta River, then climbs through Oberlin Pass and arrives in Yreka (historically, Shasta Butte City). The trail ends at Discovery Park, the site of the gold discovery that led to the founding of Shasta Butte City.

Virtually all of the Yreka Trail, including both the 1852 and 1854 routes, has been identified by historical research and archeological field survey (e.g., Barnes et al. 2004, Sullivan et al. 2005).

**Historical Assets:** Logging and other activities have destroyed sections of the Yreka Trail, but archeological research carried out by OCTA and historical society volunteers, the BLM, the US Forest Service, the State of California, and others have identified a number of sites and intact trail remnants on the route (e.g., Sullivan et al. 2005). These include a three-mile segment of intermittent original wagon trail and an emigrant grave about two miles northwest of Sheep Rock Springs; evidence of the trail and river ford on the east side of the Shasta River crossing Trail; and visible trail trace at Oberlin Pass where the trail parallels Oberlin Road. Another length of trail remnant occurs along Grass Valley Road, where researchers have documented a cobblestone roadbed with grooves cut into the stone by wagon wheels, and a section of corduroy road with the original ax-hewn logs still in place. Tails West, Inc., has marked and published a guide to the route (Brock and Black 2014).

**Historical Summary:** This route, originally an American Indian trail, was used by Hudson's Bay Company trappers in the 1830s and by explorer John C. Fremont during his 1845 expedition to the West. In March 1851, Abraham Thompson and a small group of gold prospectors were on their way from Oregon along the old trappers' trail through the High Cascades of northern California when they stopped to camp on a "flats" near Black Gulch. As the party struck camp the next morning, they noticed gold flecks in the mud where their mules were grazing. Thompson and his friends, it turned out, had spread their bedrolls on the so-called "richest square mile on earth," soon to be known as Thompson's Dry Diggings.

Immediately after Thompson's gold discovery became known, a flood of prospectors led strings of pack mules over the rough and rocky track. Within weeks the area was overrun with miners, men who already had been residing in California and Oregon, and a boomtown of tents and shanties sprang up. More gold-seekers arrived in August after a second discovery was made in the area, and the mining camp grew into a permanent town, first called Shasta Butte City but by 1852 known as Yreka. In 1852, a work crew improved the route to accommodate wagon travel so that goods could be freighted into the community. An alternate route, sometimes called the Military Pass Road or the Lockhart Wagon Road, was opened in 1854, carrying traffic through more open country and perhaps better accommodating the ongoing settlement and commerce of the area.

The trail in the early 1850s was very dangerous, for travelers along the Applegate and Yreka trails passed through the territories of some half-dozen Indian tribes who were vigilant in protecting their lands: the Modoc, Pit River, Northern Paiute, Shasta, Klamath, and Rogue River peoples (Silva n.d.; Silva and Arnold 1995; Arnold 1999). Conflict between white parties and Modocs flared particularly in 1852 at Bloody Point, a rocky promontory that extended onto the Tule lakebed. The point is located on the Applegate Trail about two miles south of the Oregon border and east of the Yreka turnoff. The apocryphal story of the massacre of an entire wagon train at that location still circulates, but several documented fights and many deaths on both sides did occur there, earning the spot its graphic name. Sorting out the truth of events and numbers of deaths at Bloody Point continues to be a challenge for historians.

Contemporaneous reports put the number of emigrants who died in conflict with the Modocs at Bloody Point at 50 to 60 (R. Silva, personal communication, 11/19/2012). In retaliation for the attacks, militiamen murdered 41 Modocs during a peace parley (Beck and Hasse 1975). Western historian Will Bagley considers some of the reports of emigrant deaths to be exaggerated or duplicative, with two or more witnesses reporting the same events that subsequently were understood to be different occurrences. He writes that the contemporaneous written records “all agree that warfare between Indians and emigrants killed an extraordinary number of overland travelers, perhaps more than a dozen, and many, many more Modocs before the year ended” (Bagley 2012:375).

Gold-seekers traveled to Yreka despite the danger. Both the *Alta Daily* newspaper and eyewitness George Gibbs, reporting in October and November of 1851, respectively, estimated the town’s population at a thousand residents; more were living in the outlying camps. Yreka researcher Richard Silva (1999:20) estimates the town’s population in 1851 at “probably one to two thousand,” and Siskiyou County’s first census in 1852 reported a population of 2,240. John S. Wilson, an 1859 emigrant, observed that the town that year had “12 or 1500 inhabitants 20 or 30 stores 6 or 8 hotels 5 livery stables [and] 2 churches” (Wilson 1859).

A query of OCTA’s COED database coded for the Yreka route identified five emigrant records that name either the mining camp or the trail. This number, in conjunction with Mattes’ ratio of 250 emigrants per record, puts an estimated 1,250 gold-seekers on the Yreka Trail. Silva (1999) identified 26 emigrant accounts, including diaries, later reminiscences, letters, and newspaper articles, written by men and women who traveled the Yreka Trail between 1851 and 1859. The estimated number of travelers during those years based on Silva’s count and Mattes’ ratio is 6,500. Given the richness of the Yreka diggings and the written description by Wilson and others who saw the town, the actual volume of traffic was probably toward the higher end of this range.

**Conclusion:** In sum, the Yreka Trail began as a pack trail in 1851 and emigrant use peaked within a few years. Traffic volume over the trail is estimated at between 1,250 and 6,500 emigrants, but the high end of the range is favored due to contemporaneous accounts of the population of the mining camp. Archeological research has identified a number of original trail remnants and related sites of historical interest.

The Yreka, Burnett, and Applegate trails might be considered the most dangerous of the trails through northern California, due to the deaths that occurred at Bloody Point among emigrants and native peoples. Events there graphically illustrate the impacts of the emigration on the indigenous peoples of California, and the desperation and persistence with which they resisted these changes over nearly 30 years.

Designation of the Yreka Trail would add 101.5 new miles to the California National Historic Trail and to the National Trails System.

**59. Burnett Cutoff.** This 47.5-mile, north/south study route branches off the Applegate Trail west of Clear Lake National Wildlife Refuge and meets the Lassen Trail on the Pit River, southwest of Ostrom

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

Point in Modoc County, California. The Burnett Cutoff is under consideration for addition to the California National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** The study route leaves the Applegate/Southern Route to Oregon (a designated route of the California National Historic Trail) six miles northwest of Clear Lake Reservoir and a mile and a half southeast of Bloody Point in California. The cutoff heads south for 16.5 miles, paralleling today's alignment of CA-139. The route then leaves the highway, heading south across the bed of Dry Lake and skirting the east foot of Timber Mountain. South of Timber Mountain the study route veers southeast and briefly rejoins CA-139 near Plum Ridge before turning south again. It passes east of Upper Mud Lake and west of Fleener Butte before entering Rose Canyon. It then follows Rose Canyon south, passing the foot of Crank Mountain, then swings southeasterly over a saddle below Ostrom Point to join the Lassen Trail (also designated California National Historic Trail) at the big bend of the Pit River southwest of Ostrom Point in Modoc County.

Most of the length of the Burnett Cutoff route has been identified by historical research and archeological field survey. About three-quarters of the length of this trail crosses public lands managed by Modoc National Forest.

**Historical Assets:** Twentieth century development activities have impacted the trail corridor in places. In the north, at the junction of the Burnett Cutoff and the Applegate/Southern Route, evidence of the trail is obscured by agricultural and highway development. Researchers have identified more than 21 miles of intermittent, original trail remnants along the route, including a 3.8-mile section of rock-edged swale with foot-high berm in the vicinity of Dry Lake. Near the lava beds northwest of Dry Lake in 1873 a battle was fought between the US Army and the Modoc Indians, who had fought white incursions since the opening of the emigrant trails through their country. The site may offer opportunities for interpretation of the Battle of Dry Lake and what is commonly known as the Modoc Indian War, and the frictions between emigrants and native peoples during the Oregon and California emigrations. Because most of the study route is on public lands, it is accessible to the public.

**Historical Summary:** When word of the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill reached the Willamette Valley in the summer of 1848, it triggered a mass exodus south from Oregon Territory. Bancroft (1963:43) writes that men deserted their "ripening harvests," and "even their beloved land-claims were deserted; if a man did not go to California it was because he could not leave his family or business....Tools were dropped and work left unfinished in the shops. The farms were abandoned to women and boys."

The first to depart, hoping to reach the goldfields before the coming rush, traveled as pack trains, but in September a group of 150 men formed a well-equipped wagon company. Peter Burnett, elected captain, and Thomas McKay, pilot, led the 50-wagon train south along "Applegate's Southern Route"<sup>81</sup> from Oregon City into California (Burnett 1946:44). From Bloody Point on Tule Lake, California, the Oregonians cut 40 miles of new wagon trail south to the Pit River, where they were astonished to encounter fresh wagon tracks. The company followed those tracks and eight days later, southeast of Lassen Peak, came upon their source: a stranded wagon company nearing starvation. Peter Lassen, a Danish immigrant who had settled in California, had been trying to guide a party of emigrants by a new route through unfamiliar country to his ranch in the Sacramento Valley. Upon entering an area of heavy timber, the small wagon party found it did not have the manpower to open a road, so the emigrants converted their wagons into more maneuverable carts and tried to work their way between the trees toward their destination. The going was slow and strenuous. The travelers' provisions ran out and they were in desperate straits when Burnett's party happened upon them. In his reminiscences, Burnett wrote, "I never saw people so worn down and so emaciated as these poor emigrants." He and his men assisted the party to Lassen's ranch, no doubt saving their lives (Burnett 1946:151-162; Bagley 2010).

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<sup>81</sup> This section of the Applegate Trail was actually part of the older Oregon-California Trail opened by Hudson's Bay Company trappers and traders in the 1820s.

Trails researcher Richard Silva credits the Burnett Company with actually opening the Lassen Trail, which today is a designated component of the California National Historic Trail.

Burnett's party was the first wagon company to enter California from the north, and the combination of the Applegate Trail/Oregon-California Trail, Burnett Cutoff, and the Lassen Trail "established the first route for wheeled vehicles between the valleys of California and Oregon" (Bassett et al. 1998:51). Its purpose was to accommodate travel in both directions between the Oregon settlements and California goldfields, and that is how it was used in 1848–1849. In his reminiscences, Burnett estimated that "at least two thirds of the population capable of bearing arms left for California in the summer and autumn of 1848" (Peter Burnett, as quoted in Bancroft 1888:43, fn.2). Other witnesses recalled "a great exodus" that left settlements nearly deserted, with only a few "old men" or women and children left behind (Bancroft 1888:43, fn. 2).

The Burnett Cutoff between the Applegate and Lassen trails reduced travel distance between Oregon and the goldfields by about 75 miles, or four to five days. When Lt. Henry Abbot and Lt. Robert Williamson encountered the Burnett Cutoff while conducting the Pacific Railroad Survey in California and Oregon in 1855, they noted that the trail was very distinct. Concludes researcher Silva, "Since the Burnett Cutoff was the only wagon route from Oregon to California at the time, it is quite likely that this route was used quite heavily until 1856, when the Lockhart Wagon Road was opened to Yreka to Shasta City" (R. Silva, personal communication, 11/19/2012).

Evans-Hatch (2004c) write that a few chroniclers (other than Burnett) mention passing through the Tule Lake area by way of Burnett Cutoff, but those researchers provide no numbers or citations. However, the trip between Oregon and California was relatively short and was undertaken by men for immediate business purposes, as opposed to being a long overland adventure to be recorded for posterity. Therefore, it is to be expected that few would keep journals of travel between Oregon and the California goldfields.

The Burnett Cutoff is not part of OCTA's COED database because it is internal to California and database managers do not consider it to be an overland emigrant route.

Documentation compiled by Silva establishes that, in addition to the 150 members of Burnett's party, others following the route included a 25-member company from the Puget Sound and the William Case party of eight men who were returning north by that road to Oregon. Alonzo Delano, approaching the goldfields from the east via the Applegate Trail, wrote of encountering a small pack party on its return to Oregon in September 1849; and likewise, Alexander Ramsay, westbound on the Lassen Trail, wrote of finding an Oregon-bound party of miners at the junction of the Burnett Cutoff in August 1849.

Altogether, documentation establishes that at least 183 men traveled the Burnett Cutoff both north and south in 1848 and 1849. Unruh (1979:84–85) puts the cumulative number of emigrants to Oregon between 1840 and 1849 at just 11,962 souls, and many of them were women and children. The total number of American emigrant men available to travel from Oregon to the California goldfields probably amounted to three or four thousand.

**Conclusion:** In sum, the Burnett Cutoff was a gold rush route used primarily in 1848–1849 for interstate travel between Oregon and California, but regular use likely continued through 1855. Firm documentation supports travel along the cutoff by at least 183 men; however, descriptions by several witnesses to the Oregon exodus indicate that as many as 3,000 to 4,000 men went that way to California during the peak of the gold rush. Some 21 miles of intermittent, original trail trace and other places of historical and recreational interest occur along the route. The Burnett Cutoff is strongly associated with the life of Peter Hardeman Burnett, a notable figure in California history. At the time of his trip in 1848, Burnett was a member of the Supreme Court of Oregon. His immediate purpose in going to the goldfields was to pay off his debt to business associates in St. Louis, which he accomplished. He later helped establish the territorial government of California, served on California's Supreme Court, and became the first elected governor of the state. Some credit his expedition to California with the opening of the Lassen Trail.

## Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes

Designation of the Burnett Cutoff would add 48 new miles to the California National Historic Trail and to the National Trails System.

**60. Henness Pass Route.** This 105.5-mile route leaves the designated Truckee Route of the California National Historic Trail three miles southwest of the Dog Valley Overlook in California and goes west through the Sierra Nevada to Marysville, California. It is under study for the California National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** The Henness Pass study route branches off the Truckee Route three miles southwest of the Dog Valley Overlook and about two miles northeast from Stampede Reservoir, just west of the Nevada/California state border. It goes west across Sardine Valley and ascends Davies Creek for about two miles, then continues west to the Little Truckee River. The route ascends the Little Truckee to Webber Lake, crosses Henness Pass, and follows Pass Creek to Jackson Meadow Reservoir. It crosses the Yuba River, climbs onto a bench north of the river, follows the bench for about 10 miles, and then turns west away from the river to follow Pliocene Ridge, south of Bald Mountain. The route next follows a ridge between Orient Creek and the North Yuba River to Camptonville, California. There it turns south to descend and cross Oregon Creek. It crosses the Middle Fork of the Yuba River, and continues southwest across San Juan Ridge and through French Corral to cross the South Fork of the Yuba River at Bridgeport. It continues over Mooney Flat and through Smartsville, crosses north and west of Beale Air Force Base, and passes through Hammonton to the community of Linda, California. The route ends at the Yuba River in the vicinity of Linda.

**Historical Assets:** Trail-related places of historical interest include the Independence Creek Junction, where an original segment of the old road is still visible; an intact road segment and related ruins of the Davis Stage Station on lands managed by the US Forest Service; and the ruins of More's Stage Station and related swales at Kyburz Flat, located on public and private lands. In addition, there are 19 other stage station sites on public lands and monuments along the length of the road. Much of the route today is accessible to high-clearance vehicles.

**Historical Summary:** The Truckee-Donner route through the central Sierra Nevada was not well situated to serve gold rush traffic bound for Goodyears Bar, Downieville, and other emerging mining camps along the north and middle forks of the Yuba River. In 1850 Joseph Zumwalt, after mining for a few weeks along the Downie River, tried a new, more direct route on his way east to buy supplies. Soon other miners and ranchers (whose operations supported the camps) began using Zumwalt's new trail.<sup>82</sup> By 1851 numerous distributor routes branched off the main Henness Pass trail to connect the mining camps and neighboring communities (Mackey et al. 1993:12). The trail came into common use by gold rush traffic in 1852. It had wide turns that could accommodate freight wagons, good access to feed for the draft animals, and many ranches and farms along the way that provided products for the trade. Further, the road through Henness Pass, at 6,920 feet, was lower in elevation than other trails through the Sierra, such as the Truckee Trail (Donner Pass at 7,056 feet and Roller Pass at 7,080 feet), the Carson Trail (West Pass at 9,600 feet), and the Johnson Cutoff (Echo Summit Pass at 7,382 feet) (S. Shaw, personal communication, 11/29/2012). Consequently, the Henness Pass Trail stayed open later in the year.

During the 1850s the Henness Pass Road developed into a thoroughfare that facilitated regional trade in both directions across the Sierra Nevada. The Nov. 24, 1854, issue of the Downieville *Sierra Citizen* reported, "The [Henness Pass] roads are literally lined with teams and pack trains, some loaded with provisions and other materials for the various mining towns, while others are engaged in drawing wood and tunnel timber." To serve that traffic, Dr. David G. Webber built a large resort hotel at Truckee Lake

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<sup>82</sup> Rancher Patrick Henness reportedly spread hay from his Jackson Meadow ranch over the trail to improve it, and consequently his name rather than Zumwalt's became associated with the emerging road (Mackey et al. 1993:11).



(later known as Webber Lake) on the Henness Pass Road, and soon numerous other waystations and hotels spring up along the way (Mackey et al. 1993:11–12). However, “throughout the 1850s [the Henness Pass trail] remained a rough wagon road” (Howard 1998:160).

That began to change in 1859, when the Washoe silver boom prompted thousands of California miners to rush eastward across the Sierra Nevada. Businessmen in Nevada City and Marysville, California, wanting to tap into the Washoe trade, needed to improve the Henness Pass Road so that it could compete with the heavily used road to Placerville (Mackey et al. 1993:13; Howard 1998:160). To that end, private investors from both towns incorporated turnpike (toll road) companies to improve the trail into a good wagon and stagecoach road. By the 1860s the Henness Pass Toll Road (also known as the Truckee Turnpike, Virginia Turnpike, and Pacific Turnpike) was a well-established route for coaches and freight wagons traveling in either direction. Trade with the expanding mines and Virginia City population accounted for most of the freight (primarily lumber and hay) carried over the Henness Pass Road. So heavy was the traffic that passenger coaches ran at night to avoid the freight wagons (Mackey et al. 1993:18). Waystations and hotels sprang up along the length of the road, and “by the early 1860s travelers and teamsters could travel almost within sight of waystations no matter where they were on the road” (Mackey et al. 1993:19).

Completion of the Central Pacific Railroad across the Sierra Nevada in 1868 brought an end to heavy trans-Sierra travel over Henness Pass. The road was still used for local commerce and logging into 1880s.

Trail researcher Steve Shaw estimates that at least 2,000 emigrants used the Henness Pass Road from 1852 to 1857, and he and others have identified eight diaries and several newspaper accounts that document some of that use. A query of OCTA’s COED database for the Henness Pass route identified 12 emigrant records that mention the route. Using Mattes’ ratio of 250 emigrants per known trail record in conjunction with the higher number of records boosts the total estimated emigrant traffic over the route to about 3,000 emigrants.

**Conclusion:** In sum, an estimated 2,000 to 3,000 emigrants traveled the Henness Pass Route in 1852–1857. Beginning in 1859 the road became an important regional conduit for interstate travel and commerce. Trail-related places of historical interest along the route include several intact trail remnants, numerous related stage station sites, and a historic town.

Designation of the Henness Pass Route would add approximately 105.5 new miles to the California National Historic Trail and to the National Trails System.

**61. Nevada City Road.** This 32-mile route heads west from Bear Valley, California, on the Truckee Route of the California National Historic Trail, to Nevada City, California. It is under study for addition to the California National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** The Nevada City Road study route leaves the Truckee Route of the California National Historic Trail in Bear Valley, near Emigrant Gap in northern California. It follows the modern alignment of CA-20 west over Washington Ridge. Two miles north of Scotts Reservoir, the segment divides. The northern variant goes west across Sailor Flat to Brush Creek and follows the creek south into Nevada City west of Sugarloaf Mountain, while the southern route continues along the highway, crosses over Harmony Ridge, and descends to Nevada City east of Sugarloaf Mountain.

**Historical Assets:** Trail-related places of historic interest along this route include remnants of original trail near Central House, about 12 miles northeast of Nevada City, and north of CA-20 as the wagon road leaves Bear Valley; the Harmony Ridge Pioneer Grave, dating to 1858, which is located six miles northeast of Nevada City; historic downtown Nevada City, a National Register-listed historic district; the site of Sardine Spring and related wagon swale on public land west of Emigrant Gap; and a two-mile trail segment from Washington Ridge to the historic Alpha/Omega Overlook at a CA-20 rest stop.

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

**Historical Summary:** In August 1849, Captain John Pennington, Thomas Cross, and William McCaig struck gold while prospecting along Deer Creek, on the western flank of the Sierra Nevada. First to hear the news were men already living in California, and they poured eastward from Sacramento to reach the area within weeks of the discovery. The beginnings of a town, first called Deer Creek Dry Diggings and later Nevada and Nevada City, sprung up around the strike. By the following summer, word had reached the East and a flood of westbound Argonauts was on its way. The mining camp of Nevada City “became the first and perhaps, most important foothill town in 1850 and soon became a major destination for settlers and gold-seekers alike coming from both directions,” writes historian Charles K. Graydon (1991). The Nevada City Route likely was developed by local commercial interests hoping to entice gold-rushers to the town (D. Buck, personal communication, 11/21/2012).

Graydon later mapped out the old trail into Nevada City with the help of emigrant journals and General Land Office records. He noted that it was difficult to verify the route on the ground due to “frequent rock and mud slides...and considerable logging” (Graydon 1991:13). Mining and road development have also helped obliterate the original trail.

A query of OCTA’s COED database for Nevada City identified 17 mentions of Nevada City among gold rush journals and other records. Trail historian Don Buck has collected 13 accounts by emigrants who followed the Nevada City Road. Of these, 10 used the route in 1850, and one each went that way in 1852, 1853 and 1855. Using the greater number of records identified through COED, Mattes’ ratio of 250 emigrants per record provides an estimate of 4,250 gold-seekers for the Nevada City Road.

**Conclusion:** In sum, the Nevada City Road was developed following a gold discovery in 1849 and was used by gold-seekers through 1855. An estimated 4,250 travelers used the road. Trail-related places of historical interest include trail remnants, a pioneer grave, and the Nevada City Historic District.

Designation of the Nevada City Road would add 32.5 new miles to the California National Historic Trail and to the National Trails System.

**62. Placer County Road to Auburn (Placer County Emigrant Road).** This 85.5-mile trail, better known as the Placer County Emigrant Road, parts from the Johnson Cutoff (another feasibility study route) at Carson City, Nevada. The study route heads around the north shore of Lake Tahoe and crosses the Sierra Nevada to arrive at Auburn, California. It is under consideration for addition to the California National Historic Trail. If the route is approved for addition, it should be identified by its historical name, the Placer County Emigrant Road.

**Route Description:** The route described here is conjectural and based upon limited evidence. Don Buck (personal communication, 12/22/2010) observes, “Even defining its beginning in Nevada and ending in California is conjectural.”

As currently understood, the Placer County Emigrant Road and the Johnson Cutoff branch off the Carson Trail at the Carson River and head west across Eagle Valley to Eagle Ranch/Station, which later became Carson City, Nevada. There the trail splits and the Placer County Emigrant Road turns north, probably along the corridor of US 395, to the southern end of Washoe Lake Valley. Although the historical wagon route is not securely known and researchers are investigating several possible alignments, the route as mapped for study purposes passes north of Lakeview before turning west to follow a modern jeep road through the Carson Range.

The study route continues along the north shore of Lake Tahoe through the vicinity of today’s Incline Village, Nevada, and into California. The route in California continues along the north shore to the outlet of the Truckee River near Tahoe City, generally along the corridor of CA-28. It then turns northwest along the east side of the Truckee River (the corridor of CA-89) for about six miles to Squaw Valley. The route turns up Squaw Valley to reach the summit of the Sierra Nevada and continues westerly along Forest Hill Divide. It then approximates modern road alignments along the divide for about 40 miles to

Forks House (at Foresthill), where other existing wagon roads branched off to various mining camps. Buck identifies Forks House as the western terminus of the historic Placer Valley Emigrant Road. To continue to Auburn, California, as specified in the feasibility study legislation, the interpolated study route continues along Forest Hill Divide, above and parallel to the North Fork American River. The route finally descends steep bluffs, crosses the river, and continues two miles to Auburn, California.

**Historical Assets:** Since the early 20th century, development of forest access roads for fire suppression, timber harvests, and placer mining has gradually obliterated the original Placer County Emigrant Road. No trail-related historic properties of recreational interest have been identified by researchers along this route. Parts of the proposed route through the mountains, however, are scenic, and Placerville has a historic district related to the gold rush years.

**Historical Summary:** Some accounts suggest that this route was opened in 1849 by a man named Scott, but that individual has not been identified by historians. In 1852, residents of small mining communities on the Forest Hill Divide area in Placer County, California, raised money by subscription for the construction of the wagon road that became known as the Placer County Emigrant Road. Work was completed in September 1852 at the cost of \$13,200 (Supernowicz 1987).

Forest Service historian Dana Supernowicz (1987:18) writes, “No evidence was found to suggest that the Placer County Emigrant Road, after its construction in 1852, was adopted as a major trans-Sierra artery from the Lake Tahoe Basin into Placer County. The road only had limited use due to its rugged, steep and precipitous climb to the summit of the Sierra. The elevation of the pass, well over 8,000 feet, certainly prevented access during years of heavy precipitation, such as the winter of 1852–53.”

During that wet winter, mudslides in the Carson Range closed down the wagon road, and evidently that part of the trail was never reopened. Don Buck has identified four diaries by emigrants who took the route while it was available. He writes, “With only four known diaries on this wagon road, and all were in 1852, it would mean that the [Placer County Emigrant Road] was not a heavily used emigrant route. With a ratio of 250 overland travelers for every diarist, this would mean about 1,000 emigrants, or no more than 1,500, used this wagon road in 1852.” There are no known emigrant diarists using this wagon road after 1852 which indicates it probably fell into disuse very quickly. Thomas Young’s survey of the wagon road in late 1865 indicated there were segments of the route that would have to be improved for wagon traffic, which suggests that after 1852 it was not useable for wagon travel (D. Buck, personal communication, 12/22/2010).

Later mining discoveries along the Truckee River near Squaw Valley reinvigorated the western leg of the road, but only as a local road, not as an overland route (D. Buck, personal communication, 4/25/2012). By 1869, when the transcontinental railroad was completed, “trans-Sierra emigration had slowed to a trickle” (Supernowicz 1987:19) and travelers had many good options for crossing the mountains.

The Placer County Road to Auburn is not included in OCTA’s COED database because it is internal to California and the organization’s database managers do not consider it to be an emigration route. Mattes’ ratio of 250 emigrants per known emigrant record, in conjunction with the four journals reported by Buck, places the volume of traffic on the Placer County Road to Auburn at about 1,000 travelers.

**Conclusion:** In sum, the Placer County Emigrant Road was a short-lived road that experienced use only in 1852, with traffic estimated at around 1,000 travelers. No known trail-related places of historical interest along the route have been identified, although potential exists for trail-related recreational use of the study route, especially through the Sierra Nevada. The route’s eastern terminus is speculative, the westerly route of the wagon road is largely conjectural, and the trail’s primary researcher holds that its correct western terminus is at Foresthill rather than at Auburn.

Designation of the Placer County Emigrant Road/Placer County Road to Auburn would add 85.5 new miles to the California National Historic Trail and to the National Trails System.

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

**63. Johnson Cutoff.** The 81.5-mile Johnson Cutoff study route leaves the Carson Route northeast of Carson City, Nevada, and crosses the Sierra Nevada to Johnson's Ranch, about two miles west of Camino, California. Johnson Cutoff is under consideration for addition to the California National Historic Trail; about 27 miles of it coincide with the designated Pony Express National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** The Johnson Cutoff comprises a number of road segments that were developed incrementally and joined together as a single emigrant road between 1849 and 1852. The route branches off the Carson Route two miles northeast of New Empire, Nevada, and follows the modern alignment of US 50 for three miles before jogging south into downtown Carson City, Nevada. It continues southwest up Kings Canyon and crosses a divide to Clear Creek, and then goes west up Clear Creek into Toiyabe National Forest. The route next crosses the Carson Range of the Sierra Nevada, at times intersecting US 50. It turns south at Spooner Lake, running along a ridge east of Lake Tahoe to Tahoe Village, where the Georgetown Cutoff (also a feasibility study route) merges and coincides with the Johnson Cutoff.

The trail crosses into California at Stateline, Nevada, continues through today's city of South Lake Tahoe, enters Eldorado National Forest, and goes southwest along the eastern edge of Lake Valley. It turns south, crosses the Upper Truckee River, and turns west along the South Fork American River approximating the alignment of today's US 50. The route leaves the highway at Bald Mountain, crosses Atherton Flat, and climbs Peavine Ridge. Next the trail follows Peavine Ridge west and descends Telephone Ridge to a crossing of the South Fork American River at Bartlett's Bridge. (In 1855 the bridge washed out and was replaced by Brockliss Bridge, a short distance east, which for several years served as the primary crossing of the South Fork of the American River.) The route continues to Union House, a junction of the Johnson Cutoff, the Pony Express Trail, and the Carson Route. The Johnson Cutoff and Pony Express Trail then run west together along US 50 through Pollock Pines and Camino to end at Johnson's Ranch, west of Blakeley Reservoir.

**Historical Assets:** Trail-related places of historical interest include the Johnson Grade trail segment, which ascends a steep grade through a dense stand of pine and fir; Sportsman's Hall, a one-time Pony Express station, and several Pony Express markers at Pollock Pines; and numerous original trail remnants. Most of these places are related to the Pony Express, but they would have been in use and observed by travelers during the period when the trail was in use.

**Historical Summary:** In 1849, hotelier and entrepreneur John Calhoun Johnson established his Six Mile Ranch (better known as Johnson's Ranch) east of Placerville, California. Seeking to draw the emigration to his businesses, Johnson soon began enticing travelers bound for Placerville to leave the Carson Route at Union Hill (near Pollock Pines, California) and follow a route he had blazed to his ranch, where they could camp or lodge and buy food.

In 1852, Johnson extended his trail along the east side of Lake Tahoe to Carson Valley, creating a lower elevation and more direct "cutoff" to his ranch. Initially it was just a rough pack trail suitable for foot and horse traffic, but soon improvements—including route adjustments, grading, and bridge construction—were underway to open the trail to wagons. By 1853 the Johnson Cutoff "was viewed as a viable, more direct route to the northern mines and Sacramento than both the Mormon-Carson and Donner routes" (Supernowicz 1996:17). The new road was about 75 miles shorter and 2,000 feet lower in elevation than the original Carson Route through the Sierra (Bagley 2012:371), and it required only one river crossing.

It was not an easy road, however, for it required a hard pull over a 700-yard, 30 percent grade to Johnson Pass (J. Winner, personal communication, 11/28/2012). Emigrant William Gobin wrote in 1852, "It took fifty men of us and all the oxen we could hitch to the wagons to take thirteen wagons up [Johnson Pass] in two days. It takes all the men that possibly can get hold of a wagon and four yoke of oxen to move an empty wagon and sometimes they don't move it....it is just like climbing a tree only worse" (as quoted in Supernowicz 1996:17).

In the summer of 1853, Placerville residents raised money to improve sections of the cutoff, thereby encouraging still more emigrants to use the route. On Aug. 6, 1853, the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors declared the Johnson Cutoff a public highway (Supernowicz 1996:18), and by the following year more than 20 waystations were established along the road to provide feed and water for livestock, provisions and prepared meals for travelers, and sometimes even lodging accommodations. Johnson's Ranch (not to be confused with the Johnson Ranch on the Donner trail near Wheatland, California), in particular, became a popular stopping place for emigrants. During the 1850s, hundreds of emigrants could be found encamped on the 320-acre ranch on any given night during the emigration season.

Despite development and promotional efforts, however, emigration and further road improvements on the cutoff started lagging in 1854. Trail researchers have identified about 10 emigrant diaries that reference the route between 1853 and 1856. In fact, one of the roughest eastern parts of the cutoff, from Spooner Summit to the base of Johnson's Pass, appears to have been abandoned in favor of routes through Carson Canyon and Luther Pass.

In 1857, three counties appropriated money for the construction of a new wagon road that roughly followed the original cutoff route (Supernowicz 1996:18). This effort resulted in an improved county road that ran east of Pollock Pines, along Peavine Ridge, up Slippery Ford Hill, and on across the Sierra. A probable increase in traffic over parts of that road in the late 1850s and early 1860s is suggested by the identification of nearly 20 emigrant diaries describing that route between 1857 and 1864.

Evans-Hatch (2004c) identify nearly 50 emigrant diaries, most written in 1852, 1853, and 1859, that document travel over the Johnson Cutoff. A query of OCTA's COED database yielded 64 contemporaneous records, dating between 1849 and 1864, with mention of the cutoff or ranch (presumably the correct Johnson's Ranch). Mattes' ratio of 250 emigrants per record, in conjunction with the 64 COED records, places an estimated 16,000 overland emigrants on this trail.

**Conclusion:** In sum, Johnson Cutoff was an incrementally developed trans-Sierra road that carried traffic between Nevada's Carson Valley and Johnson's Ranch in California. Judging from emigrant diaries and descriptions of emigrants encamped and Johnson's Ranch, an estimated 16,000 emigrants followed part or all of this trail between 1849 and 1864. Parts of the cutoff were used by the Pony Express in 1860 and 1861. Trail-related places of historic interest several Pony Express-related sites and a trail remnant on public lands; trail setting through the Sierra is largely intact.

Designation of the Johnson Cutoff would add 82 miles to the California National Historic Trail. It would add 55 new miles to the National Trails System, as part of the study route coincides with the designated Pony Express National Historic Trail.

**64. Georgetown/Daggett Pass Trail (Daggett Pass to Georgetown Trail).** This 74.5-mile study route branches off the Carson Route at Daggett Creek, south of Walley's Hot Springs, Nevada, climbs Daggett Grade to South Lake Tahoe, and ends in Georgetown, California. The trail is more properly called the Daggett Pass-Georgetown Trail, and should be so named if it is designated as part of the California National Historic Trail, for which it is under consideration. About 25.5 miles of this route coincide with the designated Pony Express National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** The Daggett Pass-Georgetown study route leaves the Carson Route a mile south of Walley's Hot Springs, Nevada, and climbs Daggett Grade through Haines Canyon to Daggett Pass, in the Carson Range of the Sierra Nevada. From there the trail descends to Stateline, Nevada, where it joins the Johnson Cutoff and enters California. It follows the Johnson Cutoff route, described above, into Eldorado National Forest and on to Atherton Flat, where the Johnson Cutoff continues west and the Daggett Pass-Georgetown route turns northwest. From there the study route crosses Silver Creek, runs north of Ice House Reservoir, and crosses the east end of Union Valley Reservoir. It follows Pilot Creek and continues through Quintette, California. The route then follows the Georgetown Divide and descends Hotchkiss Hill to the mining town of Georgetown.

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

The route is currently mapped mostly based on historical documentation; archeological field survey along the route was underway as this document was in preparation.

**Historical Assets:** Trail-related places of historical interest along this route include the original junction of the Georgetown Road and Johnson Cutoff, where a tollhouse once stood. The site is located on public lands near Wright's Lake. Parts of the original pack trail into Georgetown serve as equestrian and hiking trails, managed by the US Forest Service. Georgetown itself is a California Historical Landmark.

**Historical Summary:** Georgetown, California, was named for George Phipps, who was among a party of sailors that discovered gold there in 1849. The mining camp also was known as "Growlersburg," either for the loud and rowdy sailors who established it or, some say, for the growling sound made by the gold and quartz rocks as they rubbed together in the pockets of miners.

A pack trail between today's Walley's Hot Springs, Nevada, and Georgetown opened in early July 1850, possibly pioneered by Mormon traders (Bagley 2012). The narrow track, treacherous with loose, rolling rocks and gravel, began with a stupendously steep four-mile climb to Daggett Pass. It was, wrote 1850 gold-seeker Abial Whitman, a route "only fit for Men & Monkeys" (Pike 1950, as quoted in Bagley 2012:293); and 1855 road surveyor George Goddard warned that "a false step would precipitate one into the rocky canyon 500 feet below" (as quoted in Evans-Hatch 2004c). The trail was reportedly 45 miles shorter and had better grass than the crowded Carson Route to Sacramento, but it was not passable for wagons. Travelers going to Georgetown had to leave their wagons east of the Sierra and pack to the mining camp.

By 1851–1852, most of the Georgetown-Daggett Pass trail (except for the eastern Daggett Pass portion and the western portion that led into Georgetown) had been incorporated into the improved Johnson Cutoff route, another feasibility route described above.

Between the autumn of 1859 and the summer of 1860, David Kingsbury spent \$650,000 to construct a new and safer road up the old grade. Known as the Kingsbury Grade, this toll road soon became the preferred route, diverting traffic from the old Daggett Pass trail and reducing the drive between Sacramento and Virginia City by 15 miles. The Kingsbury Grade is not considered part of the Daggett Pass-Georgetown Cutoff.

A query of OCTA's COED database on the location code "george" yielded a list of 30 records of travel to Georgetown, with 27 of them dating to 1850 and one each from 1852, 1858, and 1864. Mattes' ratio of 250 emigrants per record provides an estimate of 6,750 gold-seekers on this route in 1850, and perhaps an addition 750 in later years. Similarly, trails historian Don Buck has collected 15 diary accounts of use of the trail by packers in 1850 but has found none from later years, "which suggests [the trail] was of limited use after 1850" (D. Buck, personal communication, 11/29/2012).

**Conclusion:** In sum, the Georgetown-Daggett Pass trail was a short-lived trail used by gold rush emigrants in 1850, with limited use in later years. The volume of traffic in 1850 is estimated at 6,750 emigrants; total traffic between 1850 and 1864 is estimated at about 7,500 persons. Trail-related places of historical interest along the route include an original trail junction, a couple of trails-era structural features, and the California Historic Landmark of Georgetown.

Designation of this route would add 74.5 miles to the California National Historic Trail. It would add 49.5 new miles to the National Trails System, as parts of the route coincide with the designated Pony Express National Historic Trail.

**65. Luther Pass Trail.** This 9.5-mile connector leaves the Carson Route in Hope Valley, California, climbs over Luther Pass, and joins the Johnson Cutoff north of Echo Summit. It is already part of the Pony Express National Historic Trail and is under consideration for addition to the California National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** The Luther Pass Trail branches off the Carson Route in Hope Valley, approximating the alignment of CA-89 west across Luther Pass and down Grass Lake Creek to Big Meadow Creek. It leaves the highway to climb a steep ridge to Echo Summit and continues north to a junction with the Johnson Cutoff south of Echo Lake, where it ends.

The route as currently mapped is generally based on historical research. As of this writing it has not been field surveyed, but plans for survey are underway. Route adjustments may be anticipated as a result of that work.

**Historical Assets:** During their fieldwork in 2001, Evans-Hatch identified a visible, two-mile segment of trail remnants extending from the south side of Hope Valley and up the grade toward Luther Pass. Field researchers have found an extensive stretch of original trail in Christmas Valley. Otherwise, much of the area traversed by the trail has been impacted by timber harvests, road building, and other activities.

**Historical Summary:** Little information is available concerning the history of the Luther Pass trail. It is reported (but not firmly documented) that Ira Luther, a Sacramento settler, in 1854 first drove an ox team and wagon over the Sierra Nevada pass that bears his name, and the route was surveyed for a wagon road the following winter. Emigrants immediately began using the route over Luther Pass to travel between the goldfields of California and the silver lodes of Nevada. However, once the Kingsbury Cutoff over Daggett Pass opened in the early 1860s, traffic dwindled on the Luther Pass Trail. It began to see use as a logging route for hauling timber from the Lake Tahoe basin to the Comstock mines, and use of the general route has been continues through today (F. Tortorich, personal communication, 12/4/2012).

Evans-Hatch (2004c) identify four diary accounts that describe travel over Luther Pass in 1859. A query of OCTA's COED database on the code for "Luther" identified no mentions in emigrant records. A query on "Hope Valley" identified 14 records, but these are not necessarily linked to Luther Pass, as the Carson Route also runs through Hope Valley. Mattes' ratio of 250 emigrants per record in conjunction with the four journals identified by Evans-Hatch puts traffic over the Luther Pass Trail at approximately 1,000 emigrants.

**Conclusion:** In sum, the Luther Pass Trail was a late-developing, short connector route between the Carson Route and the Johnson Cutoff. The volume of trail traffic between 1854 and 1860 is estimated at 1,000 persons. A possible trail remnant in Hope Valley is the only identified trail-related place of historic interest reported to the NPS.

Designation of the Luther Pass route would add 9.5 miles to the California National Historic Trail but no miles to the National Trails System, as it is already part of the Pony Express National Historic Trail.

**66. Sacramento-Coloma Wagon Road.** The 43-mile Sacramento-Coloma study route was developed for eastbound traffic from Sacramento to the gold mines at Coloma, California. Approximately nine miles of the route coincide with existing designated California NHT. The route is under consideration for addition to the California National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** The Sacramento-Coloma Wagon Road study route begins on the Sacramento River at Old Sacramento, initially sharing a corridor with the Pony Express NHT and the west end of the Carson Route of the designated California National Historic Trail. It runs up J street and jogs over to Sutter's Fort (between K and L), which today is a state park, and continues southeasterly to a bend in the American River two miles west of Rosemont, California. From there it follows the river's south bank to Tenmile House. There the Sacramento-Coloma Road leaves the Carson Route, follows the river northeasterly through Rancho Cordova, and passes south of Lake Natoma to Willow Springs, where it crosses an alternate route of the Pony Express. Continuing northeast, the road passes south of Folsom

## Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes

Lake and turns east to Green Springs at Skinners. From there it heads northeasterly through Four Corner to Coloma, where it ends.

**Historical Assets:** The route begins in Old Sacramento State Historic Park, which includes historic buildings of the gold rush era. Coloma today is part of Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park, which offers a visitor center with period artifacts and a self-guided tour among historic and replica buildings (including a replica of Sutter's mill) and displays from the gold rush era. A historic cemetery is also located there, and James Marshall, who first discovered gold at Sutter's Mill, is buried on a nearby hillside.

**Historical Summary:** In 1847, John Sutter and James Marshall entered a partnership to develop a mill that would supply lumber to Sutter's Fort (present-day Sacramento). The site of their enterprise was a small, timbered valley called Cullumah, named for a nearby Southern Maidu Indian village, on the South Fork American River (Paul 1966:23-24; Owens 2004:93). On or about January 24, 1848, Marshall was working on the sawmill when he discovered flecks of gold in water standing in the freshly dug tailrace (see excerpts from the accounts of James Marshall and Mormon Battalion members James S. Brown and Henry W. Bigler, in Owens 2004:104-110).

The Sacramento *Californian* wrote that news of the find initially filtered out slowly and most hearers initially disregarded the news, believing it to be a hoax. But by May, according to the newspaper,

Then commenced the grand rush! The inhabitants throughout the territory were in commotion. Large companies of men, women and children could be seen on every road leading to the mines, their wagons loaded down with tools for digging, provisions, &c. Launch after launch left the wharves of [San Francisco], crowded with passengers and freight for the Sacramento....Immense quantities of merchandise were conveyed to the mines, until it became a matter of astonishment where so much could be disposed of.

(*Californian*, Sept. 23, 1848, as reported in Paul 1966)

By the time word reached the eastern US, it was too late for gold-seekers to start overland journey to California; but those already in the West, living in California, Oregon, and Mexico, flooded into the newly opened goldfield within weeks of hearing the news. Many others arrived that year by sea from Hawaii, Chile, and Mexico (Bancroft 1963:111-112). By the summer of 1848, about 300 frame buildings and a large hotel were under construction at the site, now called Coloma.

The rush began in earnest the following spring. Over a nine-month period in 1849, nearly 550 sea-going vessels arrived and docked at San Francisco. Upon debarking, gold-seekers bound for Sutter's Mill/Coloma headed east, traveling by land or water (a seven-day journey by "launch," according to Edward Kemble, who visited the diggings in 1848) up the Sacramento River to Sacramento. Many Forty-niners arriving from the east likewise proceeded first to Sacramento to supply and equip themselves for the goldfields. From there, travelers continued overland to Coloma, a long day's ride from Fort Sutter, or went on to other newly opened mining districts.

The original trail to Coloma was that developed and used by Sutter and Marshall to travel between the fort and the sawmill. Descriptions of the route are rare and light on detail, likely because the trail was short and the destination all-consuming. For example, Col. Richard B. Mason, who toured the area in June 1848, wrote that he left Sutter's Fort (Sacramento) and "proceeded twenty-five miles up the American Fork, to a point on it now known as the lower mines, or Mormon diggings" (as quoted in Paul 1966:91). His mounted party then ascended the South Fork American River through "broken and mountainous" country. This description is consistent with the Sacramento-Coloma Wagon Road, although Mason never states whether his party was following a pack route or a wagon trail. However, Mason's final report includes an engraved map, prepared from a manuscript map of the site, which is reprinted in Paul's book (1966:64). It depicts a trail labeled "Marshall's Road" and annotated "50 M to Sutters," which enters Coloma Valley from the south. Clearly, Mason's party was following a wagon trail, likely the trail established by Marshall for hauling lumber from the mill to Sutter's Fort. An 1850



schematic map by William A. Jackson, in the archives of El Dorado County Historical Museum, appears to show the same route.

Mason's 1848 map also shows another trail branching off Marshall's Road to cross to the north side of the river and continue into the mountains. Theodore Johnson (1849, as quoted in Paul 1966:107) wrote of a rope ferry there, and Forty-niner Charles Gillespie recalled that Coloma Valley had relatively gentle slopes that allowed passage out of the river canyon at that location. "For this reason," he wrote, "long trains of pack-animals, with an occasional 'prairie schooner,' were daily seen descending and fording the river at the mill on their way from Sacramento to the mines still farther north" (Gillespie 1891, as quoted by Paul 1969:197).

Use of the Sacramento-to-Coloma Road was short-lived. By the early 1850, miners had abandoned Coloma, scattering to other, more promising goldfields. Once the home of 10,000 miners, Coloma by late 1851 had become the "dullest mining town in the whole country," according to one visitor (Naudau 1965:45). By 1879 only 200 residents remained there.

**Conclusion:** In sum, Coloma was the site of John Marshall's discovery at Sutter's Mill, which triggered the California gold rush of the mid-1800s. Gold-seekers who arrived in Sacramento by sea and overland traveled the Sacramento-Coloma wagon road into Coloma Valley beginning in May 1848. At its peak, Coloma reportedly hosted a population of 10,000 miners. Most likely arrived via the Sacramento-Coloma road; and many others traveled the road, passed through the valley, and continued north to other mines. The volume of traffic on this route is estimated to have been at least 10,000 travelers. The road was heavily used between 1848 and 1850.

Designation of the 43.5-mile Sacramento-Coloma Wagon Road would add approximately 34.5 new miles to the California National Historic Trail and to the National Trails System. Nine miles of the route area already part of the design

**67. Grizzly Flat Cutoff (Grizzly Flat Road).** The 19-mile Grizzly Flat study route, located entirely within the Eldorado National Forest in California, runs between Leek Spring Valley and Grizzly Flat, California. Although the route is listed in the feasibility study legislation as the Grizzly Flat Cutoff, it is not a cutoff but a direct, constructed wagon road to a single destination. Accordingly, hereafter this route will be referred to as the Grizzly Flat Road, and it should be so called in the event the route becomes designated. It is under consideration for addition to the California National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** Grizzly Flat Road branches off the Carson Route at Leek Spring Valley and heads west along Baltic Ridge between the North Fork Consumnes River and Camp Creek. It descends the south side of the ridge, crosses the river, and turns west across broken country to end at the mining camp of Grizzly Flat, north of Plummer Ridge, deep in the Sierra Nevada. It is under consideration for addition to the California National Historic Trail.

**Historical Assets:** A mapping team headed by trail researchers from the Oregon-California Trails Association has identified several wagon swales along the route across public lands. The route lies mostly within the Eldorado National Forest and its setting is largely intact. Visitors can travel the first 10 or so miles on existing dirt roads, and the route from Baltic Ridge to down to the North Fork Consumnes River is today a hiking trail.

**Historical Summary:** The mining camp at Grizzly Flat (or Flats) formed around 1850–1851, according to the community's website (Grizzly Flats, California 2012); an 1876 historical summary in the *Mountain Democrat* narrows the date to 1851 (*Mountain Democrat*, July 1, 1876). An improved but rough wagon trail to the camp, the Grizzly Flats Road, was opened in 1852, and the route appears on GLO and other historic maps of the area. The route of the Grizzly Flats Road has been retraced and mapped by field researchers.

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

A busy community thrived at Grizzly Flats through the 1850s. Mining continues in the area today, but the town's population has dwindled to about 100 persons. Beyond these basic facts, researchers to date have identified very little information concerning the history of the Grizzly Flat Road.

Evans-Hatch (2004c) report that "very few" emigrant diaries denoting the route have been discovered; and a query of OCTA's COED database identified five records with mention of Grizzly or "Grisly" Flat. Four of these emigrant accounts date between 1852 and 1854, and one dates to 1861. Trail researchers in California have located two additional 1852 journals that, along with the others, have been helpful in pinpointing the road's point of divergence from the Carson Route. The seven records, in conjunction with Mattes' ratio of 250 emigrants per record, suggest that some 1,750 emigrants traveled the Grizzly Flat Road.

**Conclusion:** In sum, while little is known of this trail's history, the route has been mapped by researchers who have identified segments of wagon swale. Gold rush traffic on this road peaked in 1852 and the number of emigrants who used it estimated at 1,750 persons.

Designation of the Grizzly Flat Road would add 19 new miles to the California National Historic Trail and to the National Trails System.

**68. Volcano Road.** This 32-mile route branches off the Carson Route of the designated California National Historic Trail. It lies between the site of Tragedy Spring in Eldorado National Forest, California, and the community of Volcano, California. It is under consideration for addition to the California National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** The Volcano Wagon Road study route branches off the Carson Route four miles west of the Tragedy Springs site and four miles north of Lower Bear River Reservoir. It follows CA-88 southwest along a ridge between the Middle Fork of the Consumnes River and North Tiger Creek drainages. The Volcano Wagon Road and CA-8 share a corridor through Ham's Station, but the route runs north of the road for a couple miles east of Cook's Station. At the Dew Drop Fire Contact Station, the study route leaves CA-88 to follow the Shake Ridge Road southwesterly for about eight miles. The road and study route then turn south and the modern road becomes Rams Horn Grade Road. Rams Horn Grade Road works its way gradually down the side slope of the ridge to Sutter Creek, but the study route keeps to the ridge top and then descends the toe of the ridge to Volcano. The route has been field surveyed and mapped with reference to historical Government Land Office plats.

**Historical Assets:** CA-88 today overlies much of the Volcano Road, but several likely remnants of the original wagon road (including the Peddlar Hill Descent) have been identified along the state highway.

**Historical Summary:** Like several other mining spur-roads in Northern California, the road to the Volcano, California, mining camp opened in 1852 when local citizens raised funds to construct a wagon trail to conduct emigrants and freight to their community. Once the 12-foot-wide wagon road was completed, citizens stationed themselves at its junction with the main Carson route to persuade travelers to turn off toward Volcano. Boosters hailed the new road as "the best and nearest route with first rate grass and water" and promoted the mining and agricultural possibilities around Volcano and in the Amador area. The Aug. 3, 1852, *Stockton Journal* proclaimed, "11 wagons first over Carson Road, arrived at Volcano last Wednesday."

In 1861, the California Legislature authorized work on the Volcano Road as far east as Silver Lake. Construction to widen the road to 16 feet began in the summer of 1862 and was completed the following August. Traffic on the road picked up as freighters hauled fruit and produce grown in Calaveras County and milled lumbers to the Washoe mining country in Nevada. The road has been in continual use since its opening and today is the primary corridor of CA-88.

A query of OCTA's COED database on the arrival code for "Volcano" identified 20 records dating from 1852 through 1864. In conjunction with Mattes' ratio of 250 emigrants per record, this number suggests that some 5,000 emigrants used the Volcano Road.

**Conclusion:** In sum, the Volcano Road was a wagon road improved to carry traffic to the Volcano mining camp through the 1850s and into the 1860s. The volume of traffic is estimated at 5,500. Several segments of likely wagon swale have been identified.

Designation of the Volcano Road would add about 32 new miles to the California National Historic Trail and to the National Trails System.

**69. Big Trees Road (Big Trees-Carson Valley Wagon Road).** This 65-mile study route branches off the Carson Route of the designated California National Historic Trail in Hope Valley, California. It runs south about 22 miles to Hermit Valley, then turns west to end at Murphys, a mining camp in the Sierra Nevada. The Big Trees Road, also called the Big Trees-Carson Valley Wagon Road (and in the study route legislation, called the Big Trees Road), is under consideration for addition to the California National Historic Trail.

**Route Description:** The Big Trees Road turns off the Carson Route in Hope Valley, California, in today's Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, heads south up the West Fork Carson River, and then continues through Faith and Charity valleys. After crossing Border Ruffian Pass near the Blue Lakes, the route descends to the Mokelumne River in Hermit Valley. It next follows CA-4 southwest through the national forest and up the Pacific Grade, the only slope of even moderate difficulty for emigrant and later freight wagons on the Big Trees Road. (The crest lies at 8,050 feet and was often referred to as an easy grade.) The route continues southwest through Lake Alpine, California, where a section is submerged beneath a modern reservoir. It crosses the Bear Valley, Calaveras Big Trees Grove, and Avery, ending at Murphys.

**Historical Assets:** Visitors can travel an unpaved Forest Service road over Border Ruffian Pass. Calaveras Big Trees Grove, today a California State Park, is a grove of giant sequoias that gives this route its historical name. Avery's Hotel, an inn located between Murphys and Big Trees Grove, served teamsters and road-builders at Avery, California. It still operates today as a restaurant, and is an example of the many early waystations that sprang up along the emigrant routes. Much of the alignment of the original Big Trees Road still survives for local use between the communities of Arnold and Avery. Murphys Camp, a mining camp on the Big Trees Road, exists today as a historic community and California Historic Landmark. Parts of the Big Trees Road presently lies under or near CA-4 as far as Hermit Valley, where the highway veers to the east and continues to Ebbetts Pass. Only the northern portion of the road survives today near and sometimes as part of the Blue Lakes Road, a gravel road used for summer recreation. In the south end of Hope Valley are several locations where rust-stained rocks, swales, and faint traces of trail are visible. Swales also exist in Faith and Charity valleys, and in the vicinity of Border Ruffian Pass and Pacific Grade, more swales and windrows of boulders along the sides of the old road are visible. Rock walls and primitive roadways have been documented in the vicinity of Lake Alpine and Mosquito Lake.

**Historical Summary:** Wagon traffic in the 1850s reached Murphys, California, and other "southern" gold camps by crossing the Sierra Nevada along the Carson Route to Placerville, then turning south along the route now occupied by CA-49. Because the roundabout route to the southern mines was inconvenient, most gold-seekers simply continued to the more accessible northern mines. Murphys and the other camps proposed to capture some of that traffic by developing a direct road between their area and the Carson Valley, in Nevada. Business interests in the city of Stockton supported the proposal, as they were well positioned to become "the supply link to all of the people working in and around these mines" (Tortorich and Carman 2004:90).

## **Appendix A: Four Trails Study Routes**

The town of Murphys raised about \$700 for the project and hired O. B. Powers to lead an exploration party, which set out on August 8, 1855, to blaze the route. The first 15 miles were easy: a good road already ran northeasterly from Murphys to a grove of sequoia trees that had become a tourist destination. (Today the site is Calaveras Big Trees State Park.) One particularly gigantic specimen, known as the “Big Trees,” would lend its name to the new road. From the grove, a trail used for hauling hay from Big Meadow continued northeasterly into the mountains for another 16 miles (Tortorich and Carman 2004:93). “At this point,” writes historian Thomas Howard (1998:94), “they were 40 miles from Murphys, and 31 of those miles were already a satisfactory wagon road.” From Big Meadow the party blazed a route over Pacific Summit and then turned north to the existing Carson Route at Hope Valley.

With \$5,000 donated by Stockton businessmen, road construction began in July 1856 (Howard 1998:95; Tortorich and Carman 2004:201). By late August, traffic flowed along the convenient, new single-lane road with eight bridged stream crossings. Vigorous promotion of the road attracted considerable traffic in 1856–1859.

Success proved fleeting, however. In the early 1860s, in response to the discovery of silver on the southeast side of Ebbetts Pass, a new road was built over that pass. This new road branched off the Big Trees Road at Hermit Valley and drew travelers away from Murphys. In addition, deep snow persisting at higher elevations on the Big Trees Road limited its use to the summer months, making the road “little more than a summer shortcut between the southern mines and Carson Valley” (Howard 1998:96). Gradually, the Big Trees Road between Hermit Valley and Hope Valley was abandoned.

In 1862, however, the Big Trees Road between Hermit Valley and Murphys became a toll road known as the Big Trees-Carson Valley Turnpike. Over the next 30 years it received systematic improvements between tollgates at Hermit Valley, Cottage Springs, and other points. In 1911 this turnpike from Hermit Valley to Murphys became a free county road and in 1926 it was designated as a California state highway (today, CA-4). Portions of the road have been realigned (Federal Highway Administration 2004:2).

Researcher Frank Tortorich has located two diaries that document emigrant use of the road between 1859 and 1862. A query of OCTA’s COED database for “Big Trees” identified an additional 15 documents that mentioned the grove, for a total of 17. Mattes’ ratio of 250 accounts per record puts the total volume of emigrant traffic over the Big Trees Road at about 4,250 persons.

**Conclusion:** In sum, the Big Trees Road served as a supply road for commerce between Stockton and the east-side silver mines, and also carried emigrants and tourists to local sites and towns. Emigrant traffic is estimated at around 4,500 travelers. Trail-related places of historical interest along the route include original trail remnants and a state park.

Designation of this route would add approximately 65 new miles to the California National Historic Trail and to the National Trails System.

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## **Appendix A Four Trails Study Routes**

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## **MAPBOOK**

The maps that follow show each study route at varying scales depending on the length of each route.





Selected Study Route   Other Study Route   California NHT   Oregon NHT



Service Layer Credits: Sources: Fast, HERE, DeLorme, Mapbox, Inmap, Inmap, Inmap P Corp., GEBCO, USCG, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, CanBase, IGN, Kartchner, NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, Mapbox India, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

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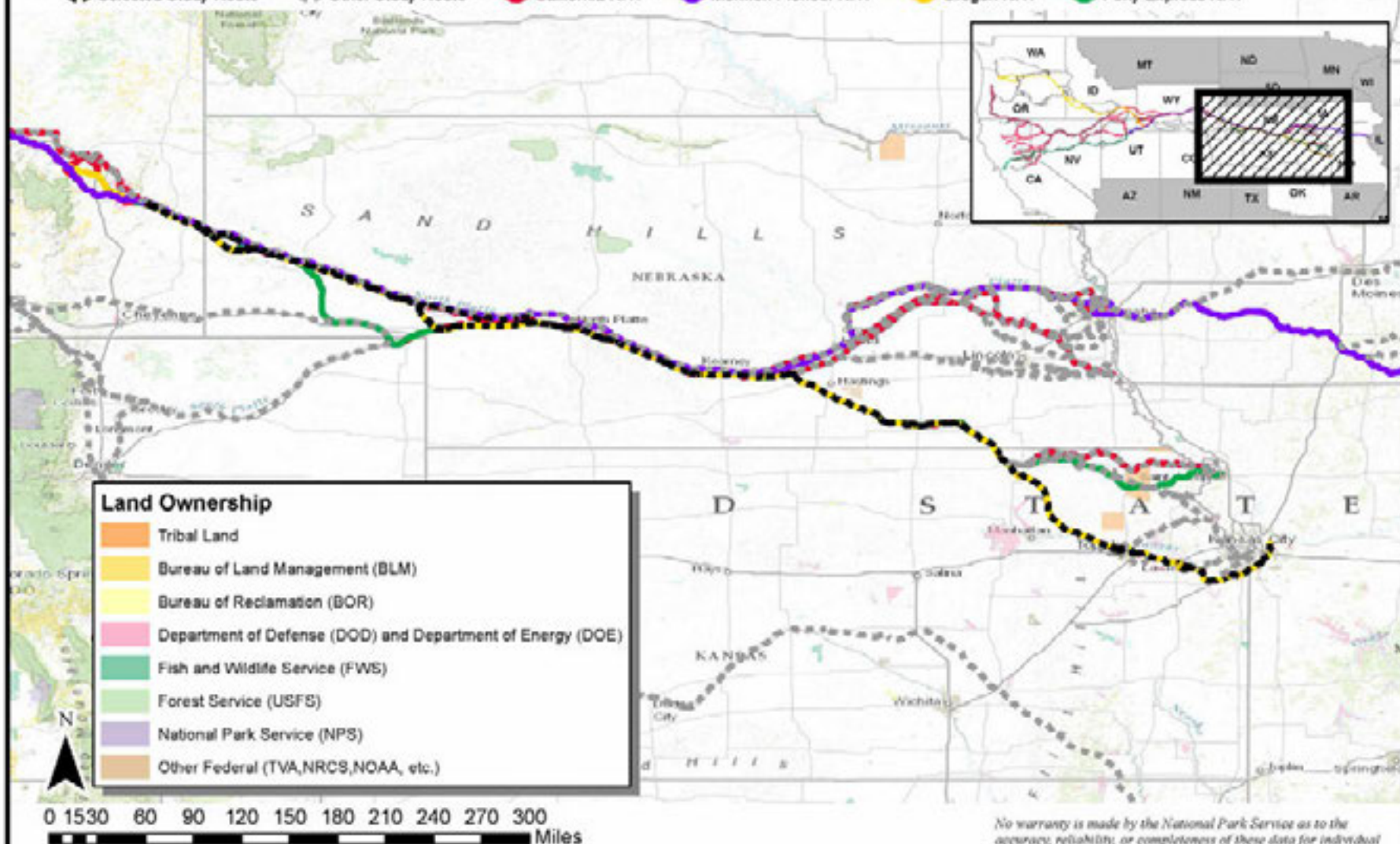
14 May 2015

Data Sources: NPRE, F.SRM, US Census Bureau, NPRE



## 02. Mississippi Saints Route from Independence, Mo., to Fort Laramie, Wyo.

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT Mormon Pioneer NHT Oregon NHT Pony Express NHT



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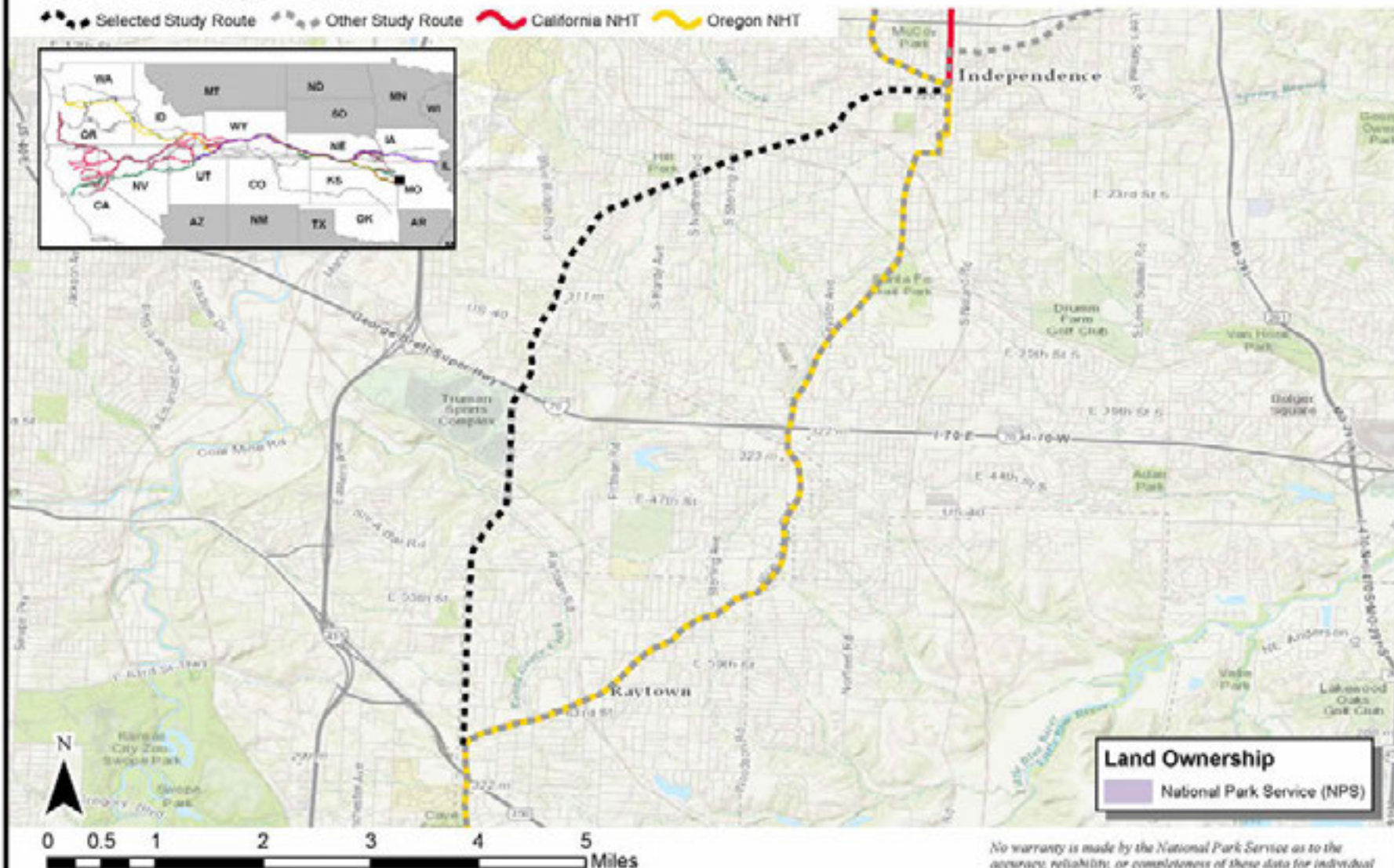
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## 03. Blue Ridge Cutoff

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT Oregon NHT



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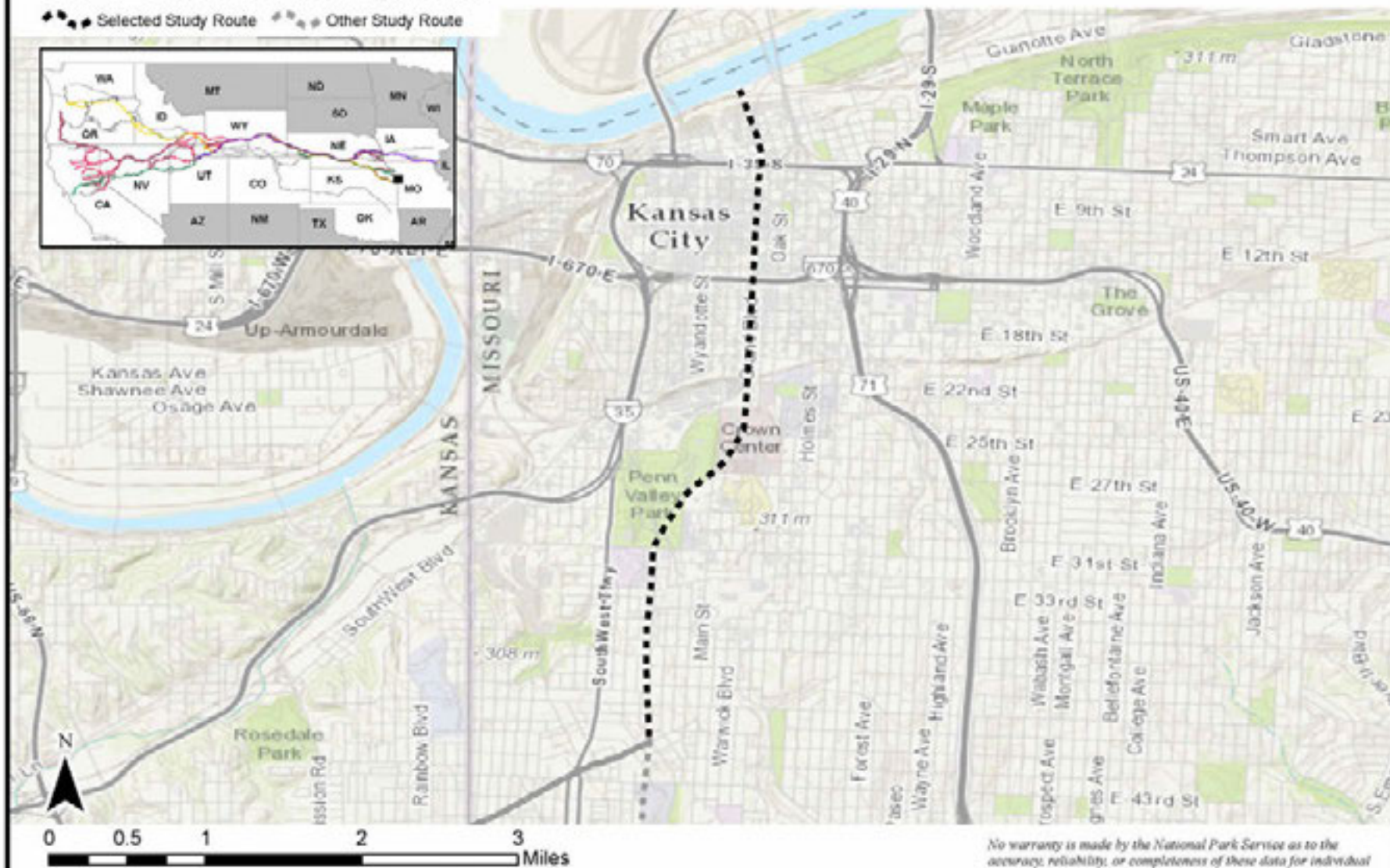
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FILE: 48406\_8\_Sx11June\_2015\_COP

Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NMEL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, Geobase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, Mapbox India, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



Selected Study Route    Other Study Route



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Selected Study Route    Other Study Route    California NHT    Oregon NHT



Data Sources: NPS, ESPO, US Census Bureau, NREL

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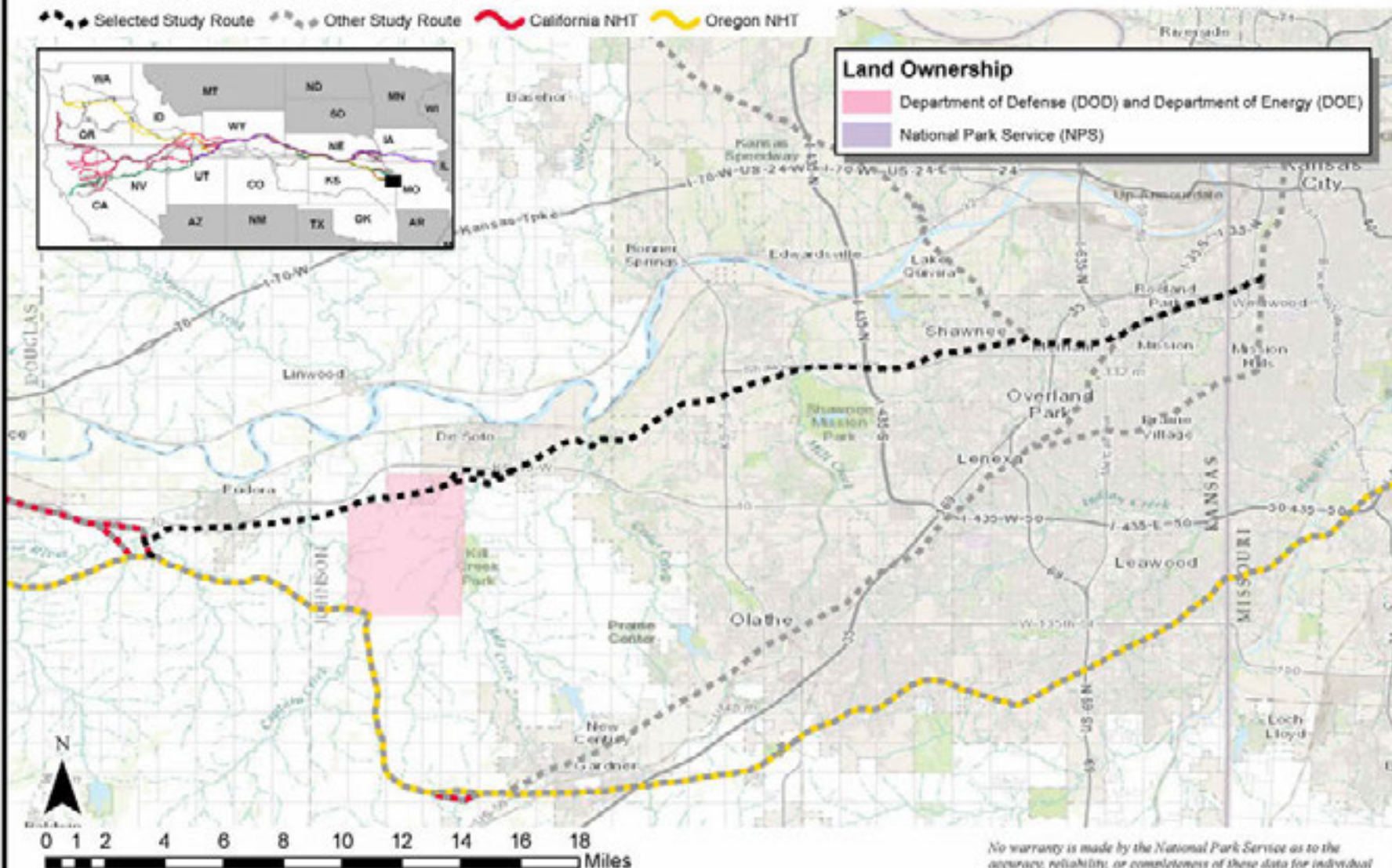
## 06. Westport-Lawrence Road

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT Oregon NHT



### Land Ownership

Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of Energy (DOE)  
National Park Service (NPS)



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FILE: 48a06\_8\_Sx11June\_2015\_DOP

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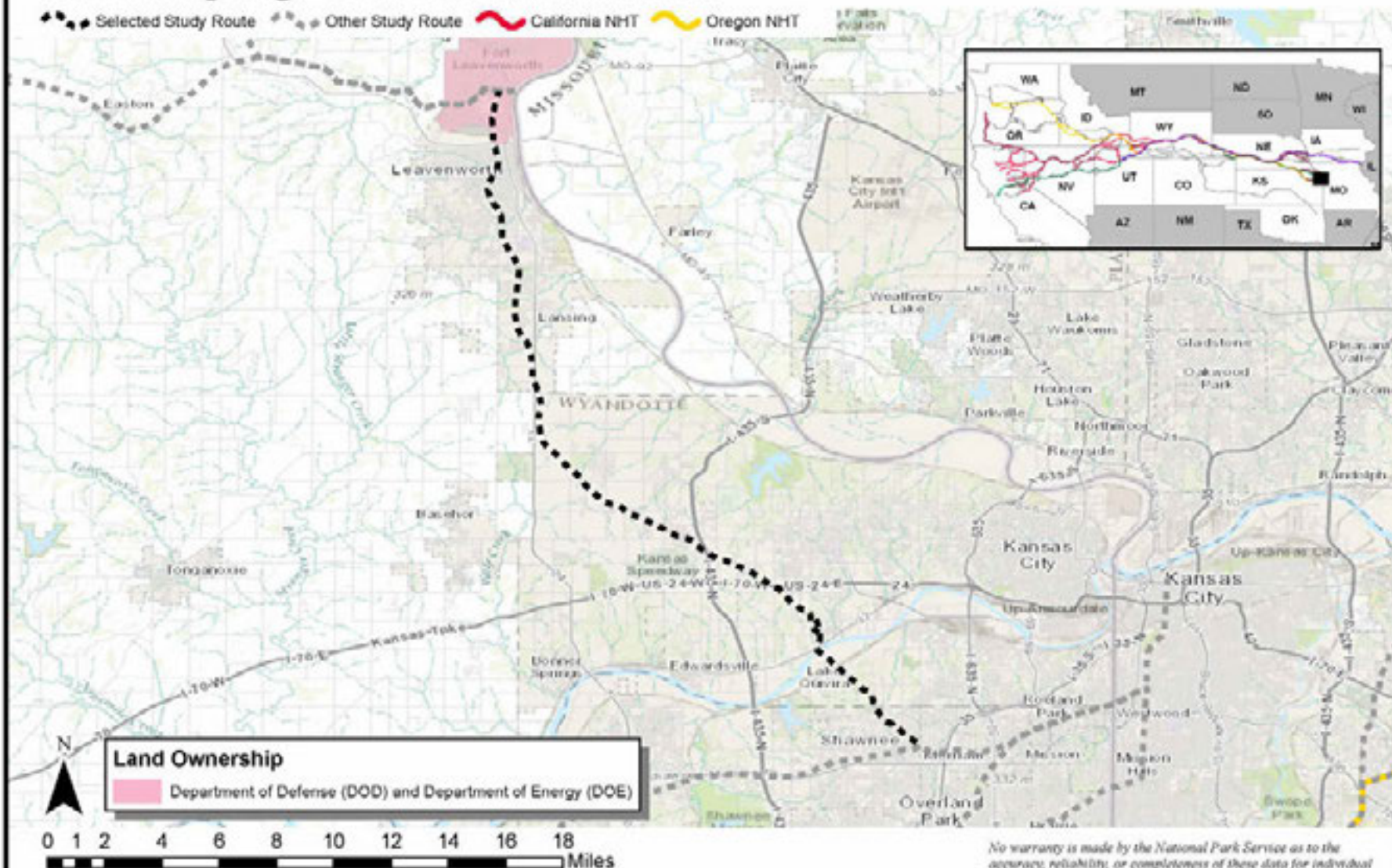
Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NREL





## 07. Gum Springs-Fort Leavenworth Route

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT Oregon NHT

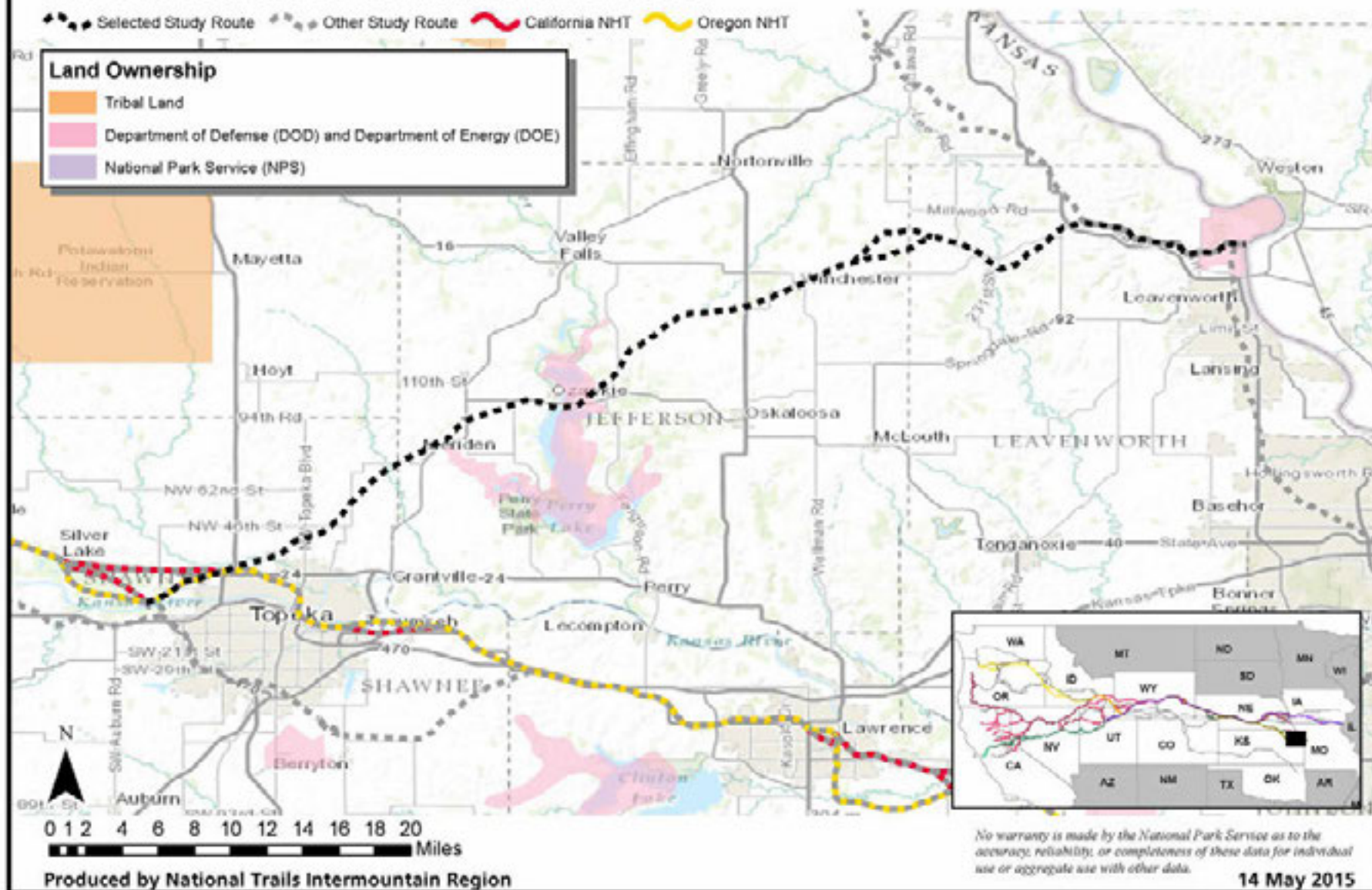


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## 08. Fort Leavenworth-Kansas River Route



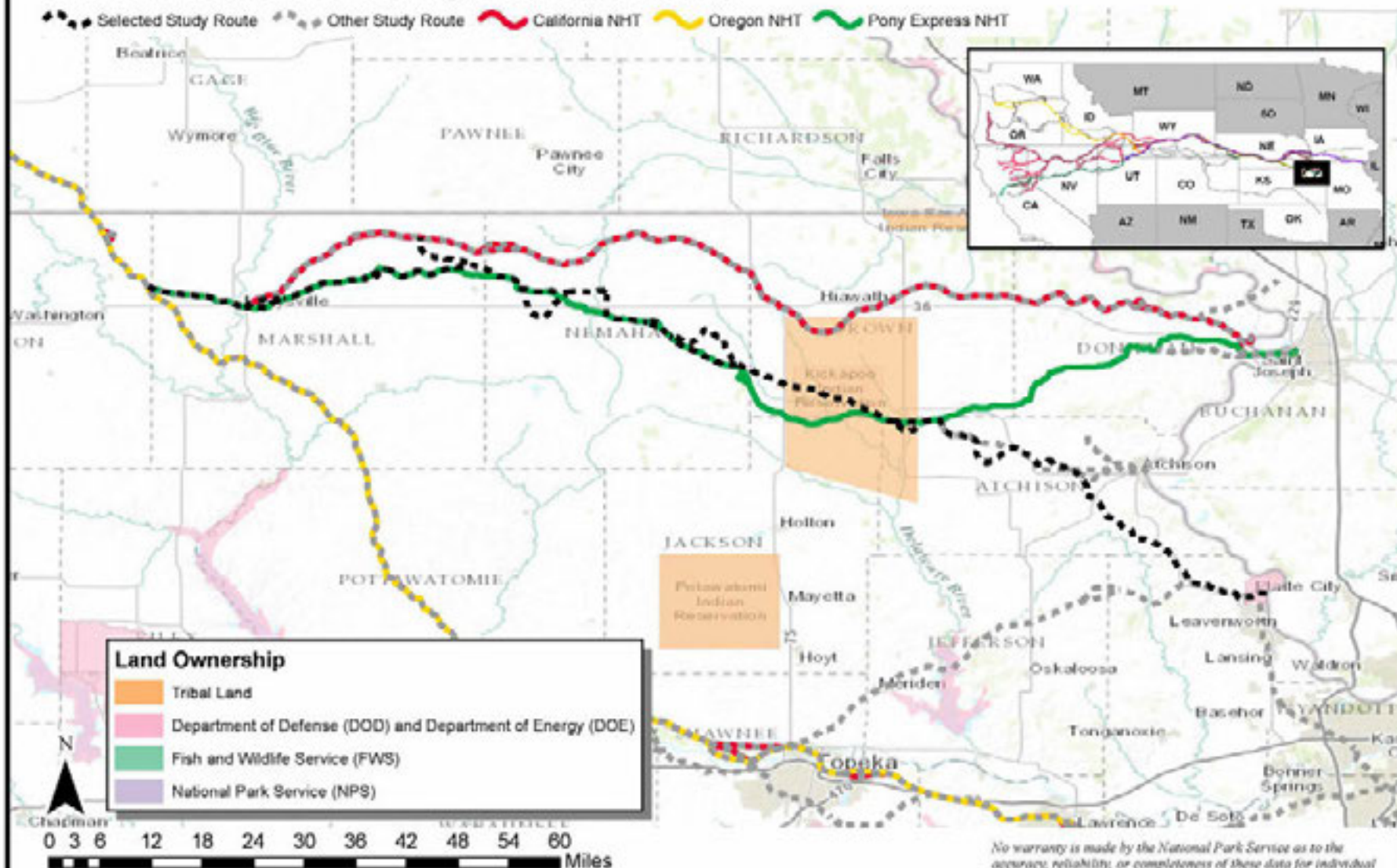
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Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NMEL  
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## 09. Fort Leavenworth-Big Blue River Route



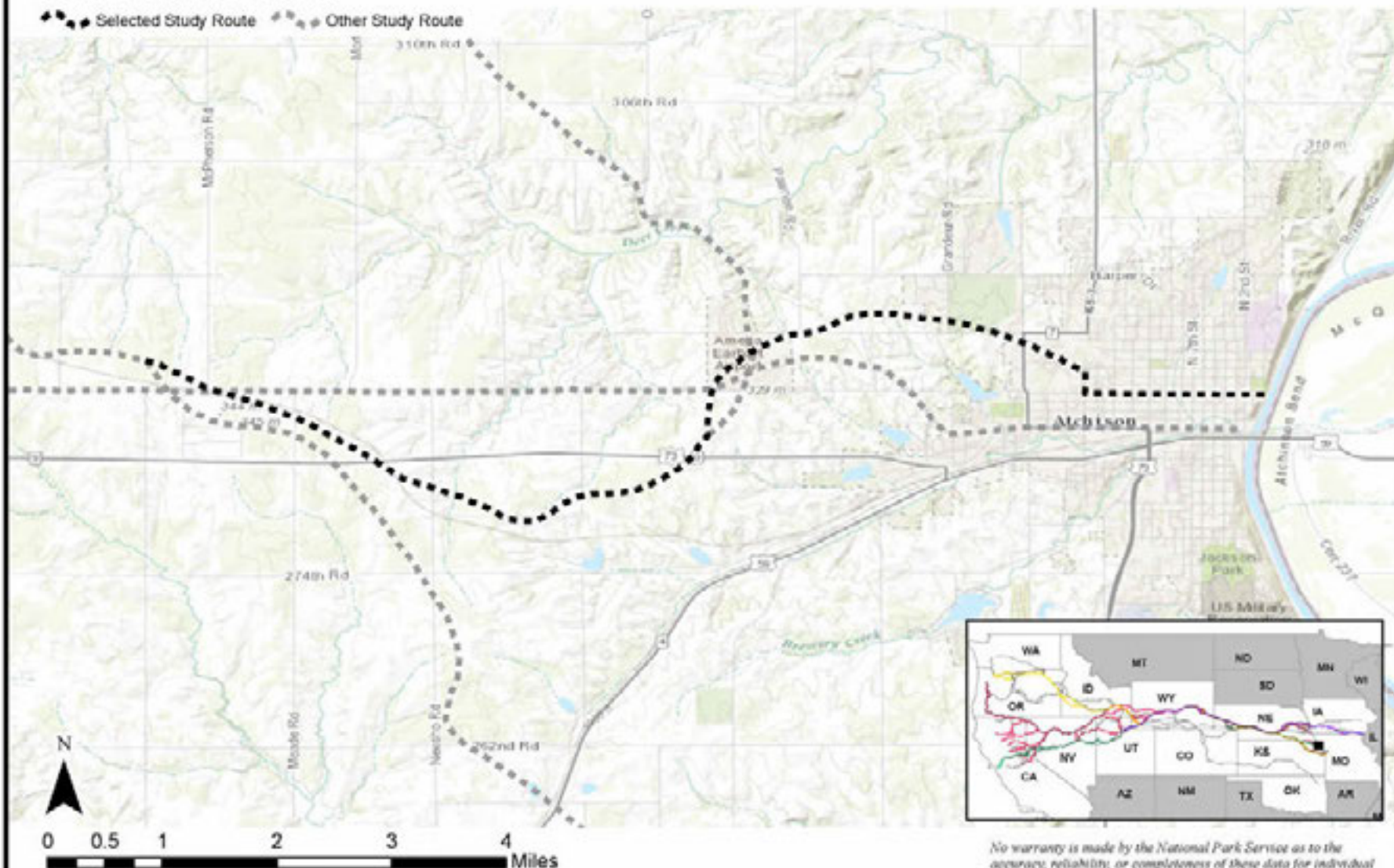
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## 10. Atchison Road

Selected Study Route Other Study Route



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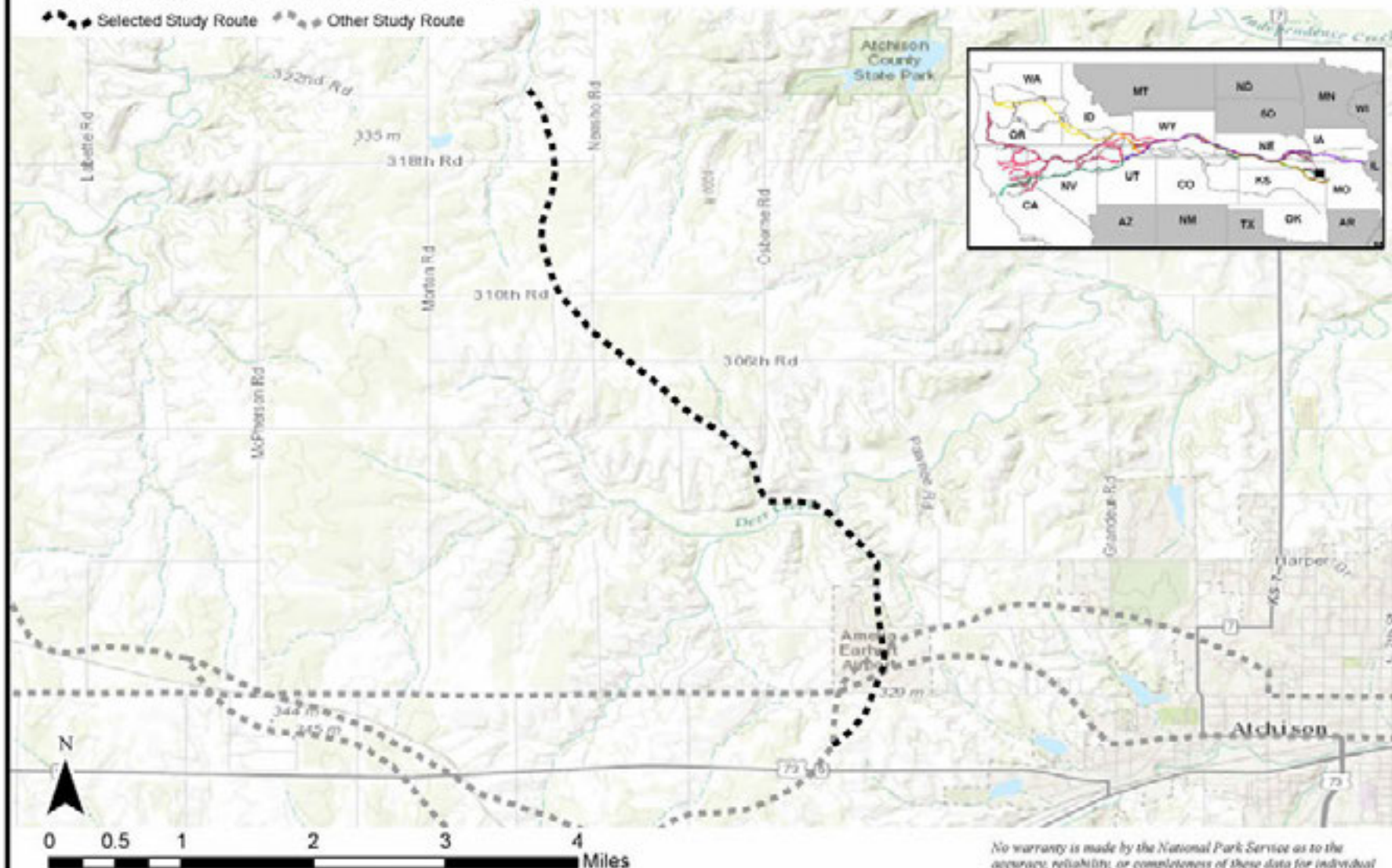
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## 11. Independence Creek Route

Selected Study Route    Other Study Route



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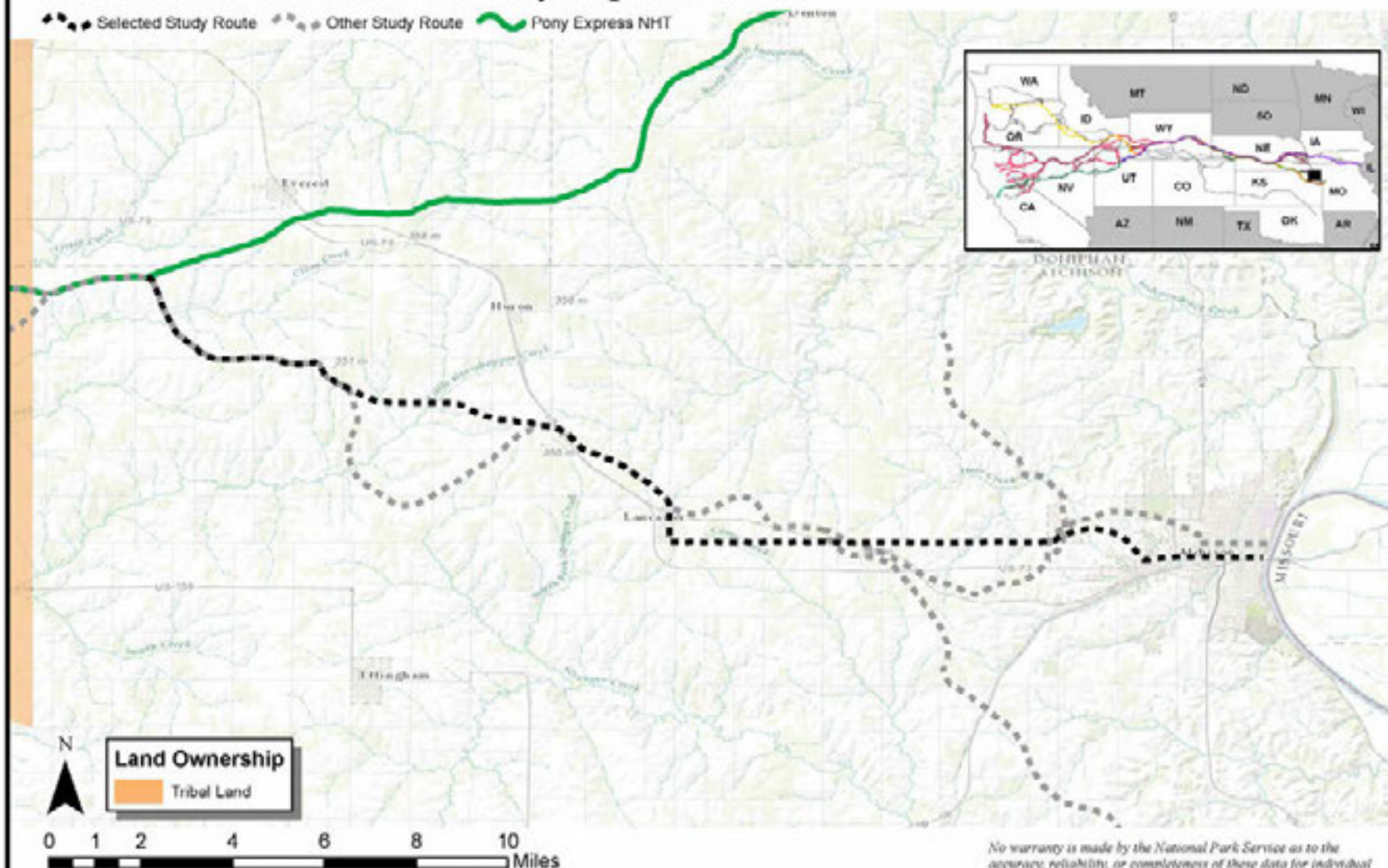
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Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NREL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, MapboxIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



## 12. Atchison to Kennekuk Pony Express Route

Selected Study Route Other Study Route Pony Express NHT



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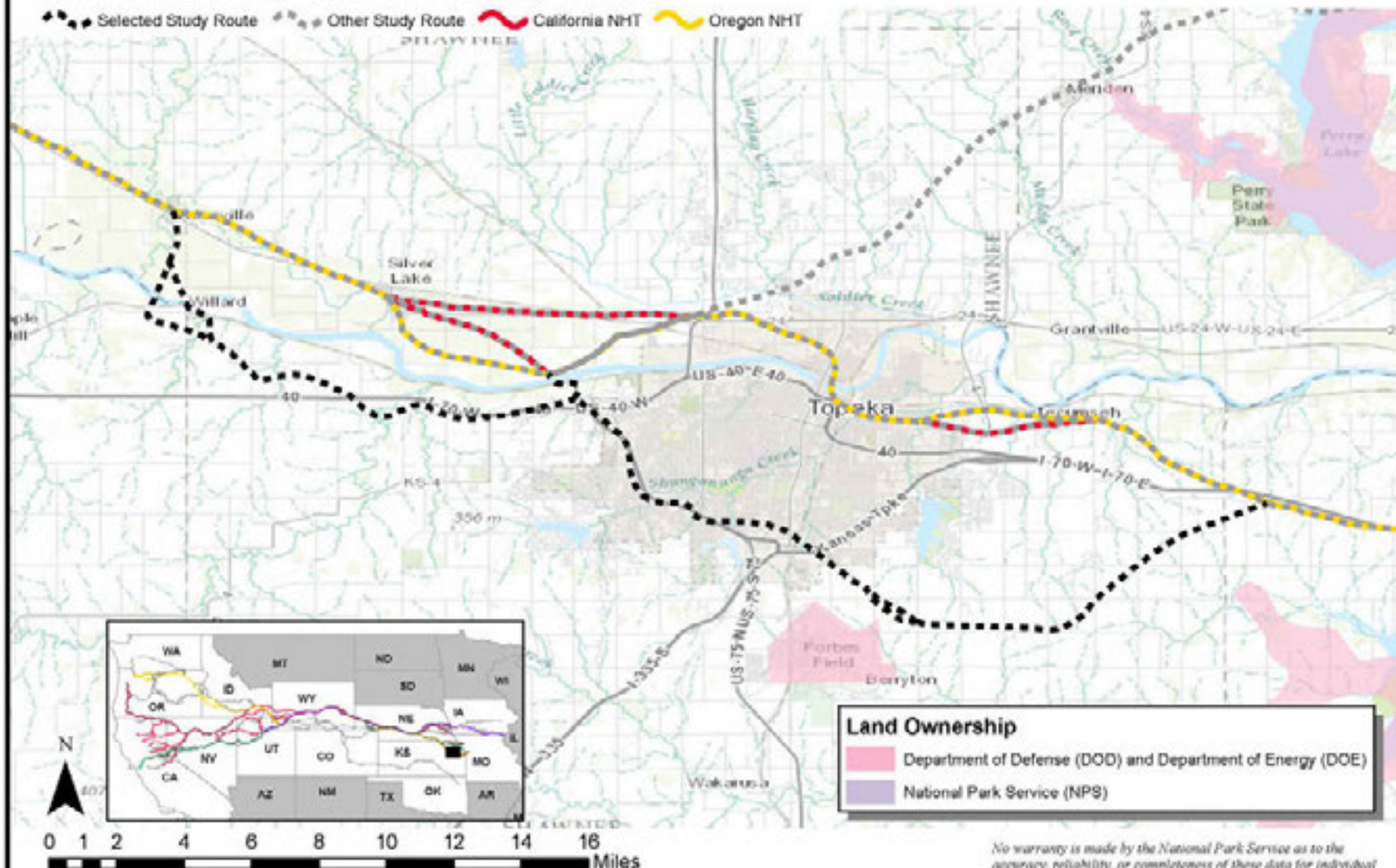
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# 13. Union Ferry (Union Town) Route

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT Oregon NHT



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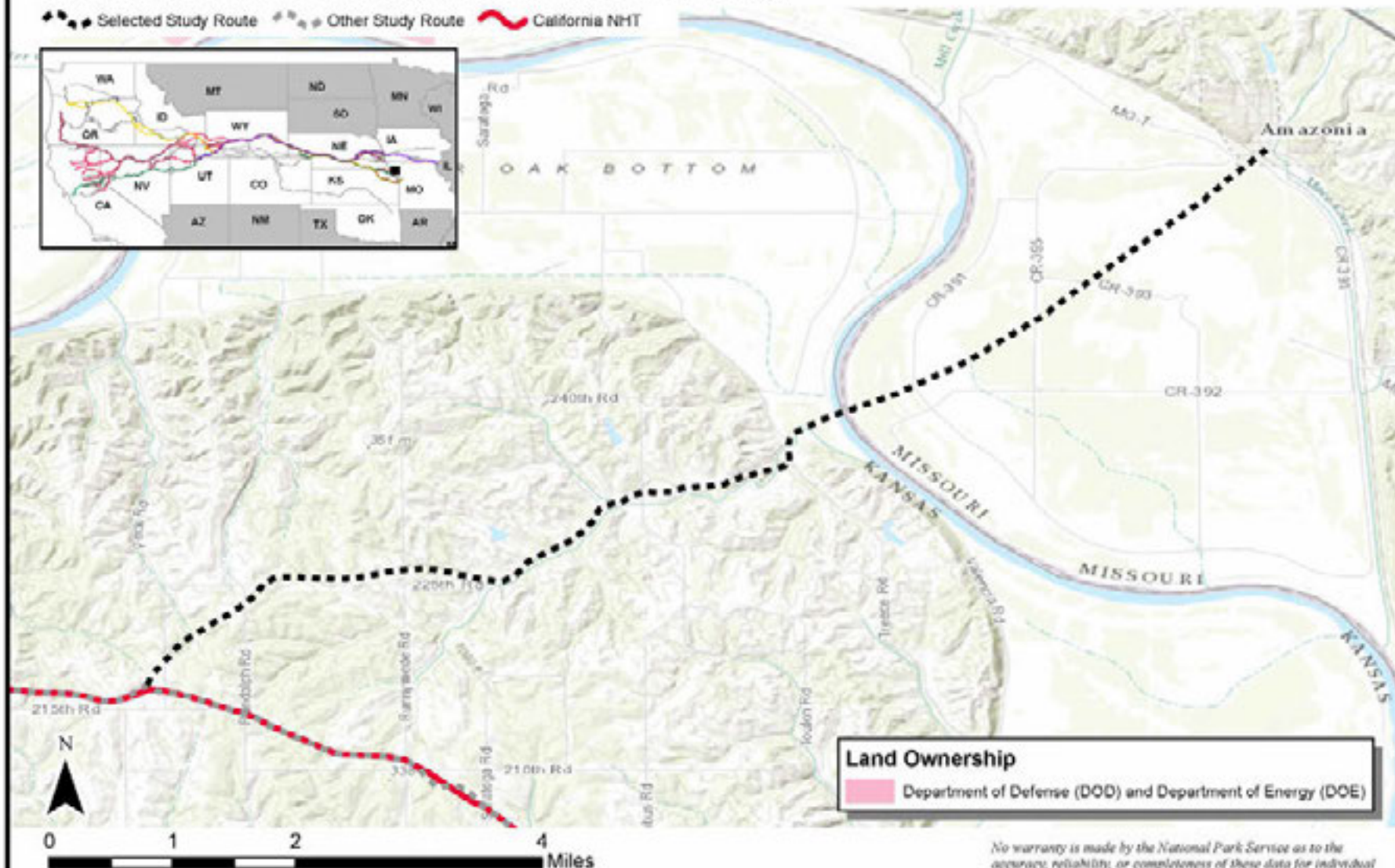
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## 14. Road to Amazonia (Road from Amazonia)

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT



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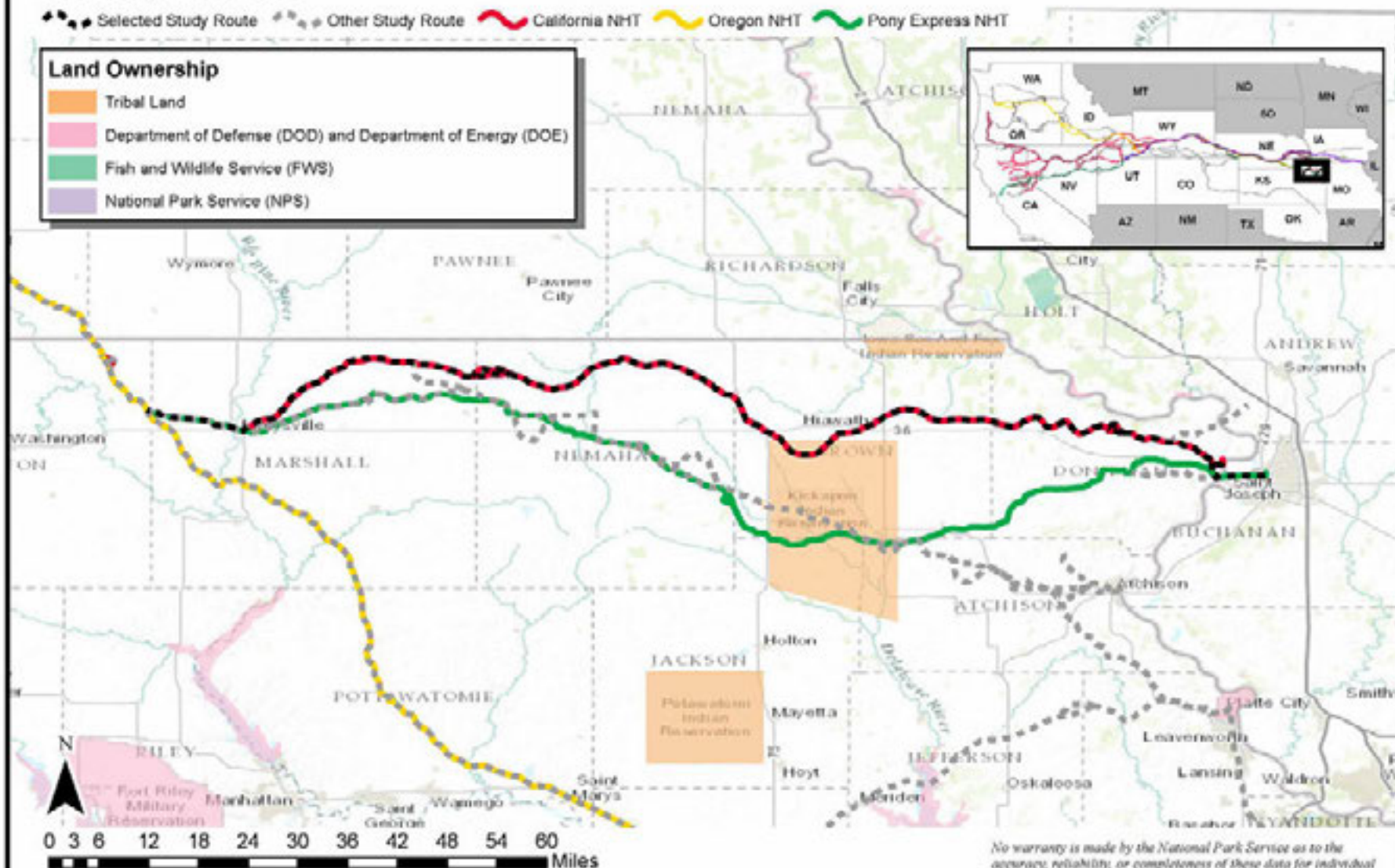


## 15. St. Joe Road

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT Oregon NHT Pony Express NHT

### Land Ownership

- Tribal Land
- Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of Energy (DOE)
- Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
- National Park Service (NPS)



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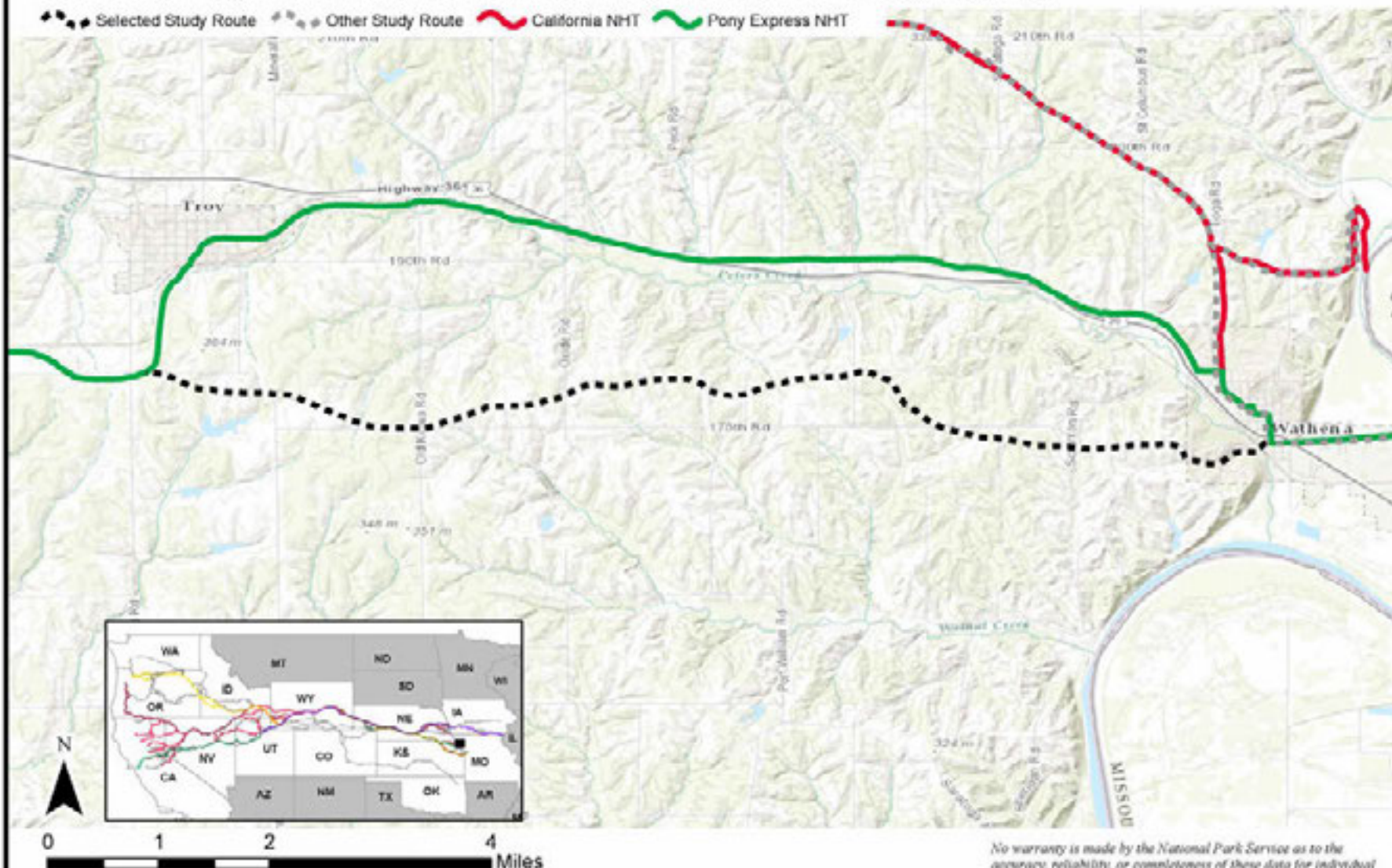
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## 16. Pony Express Trail from Wathena, Kansas to Troy, Kansas

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT Pony Express NHT



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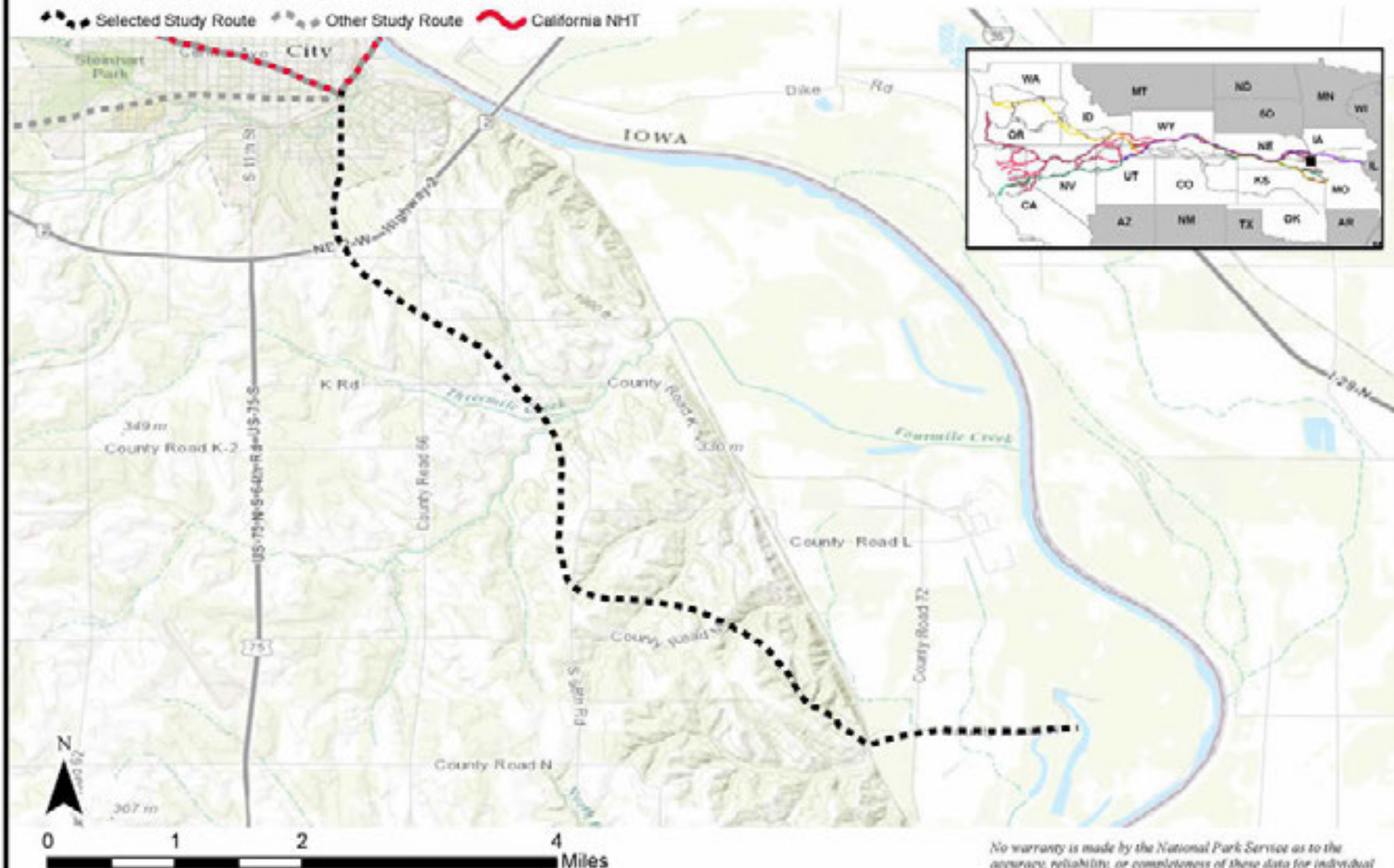
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## 17. Minersville-Nebraska City Road

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT



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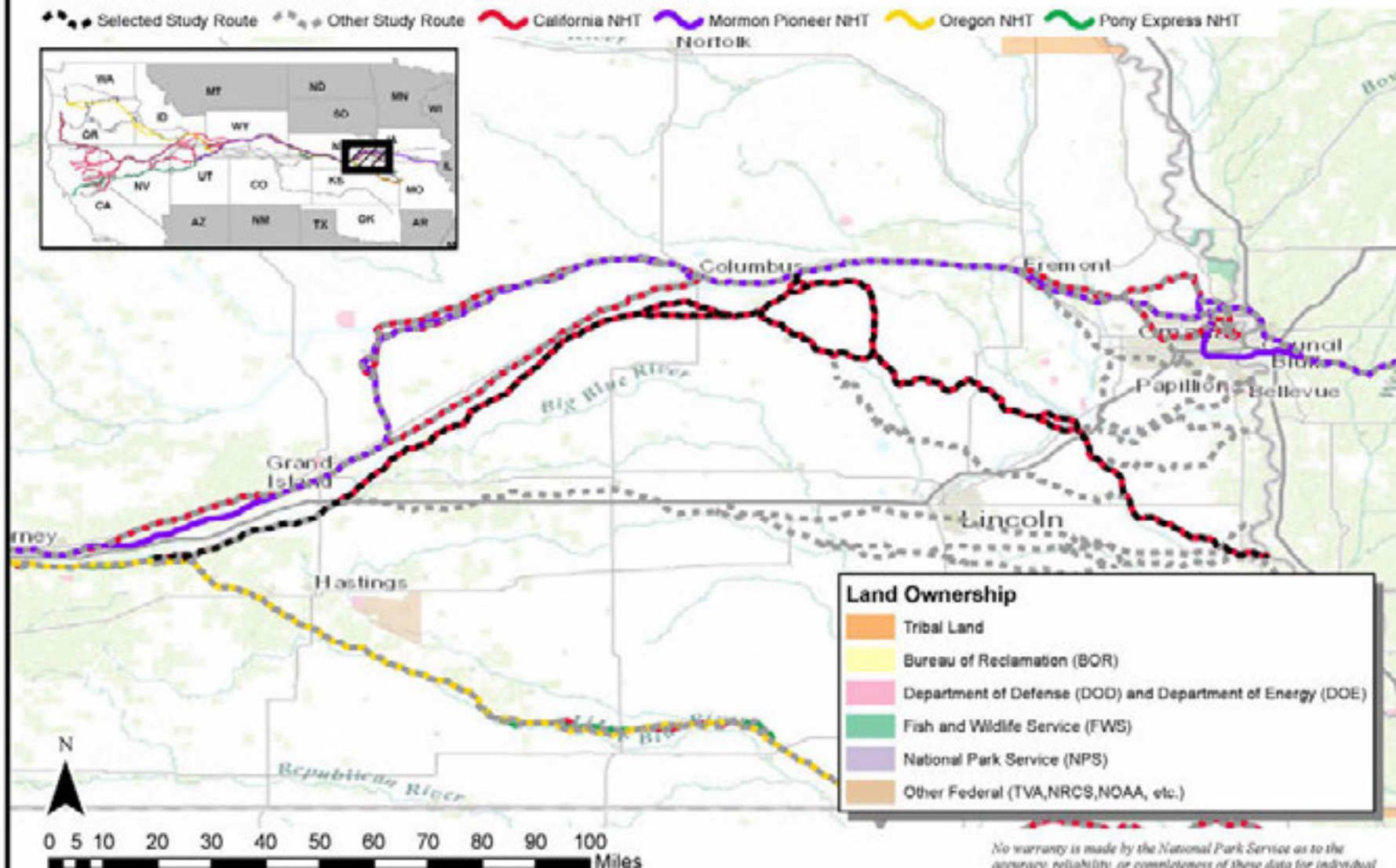
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Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NMEL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, Geobase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, Mapbox India, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



## 18. Old Fort Kearny Road (Oxbow Trail)

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT Mormon Pioneer NHT Oregon NHT Pony Express NHT



14 May 2015





Selected Study Route    Other Study Route    California NHT    Mormon Pioneer NHT    Oregon NHT    Pony Express NHT



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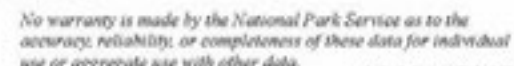
14 May 2015

PUBLISHED: 4th April 2015 8:56 AM

Data Sources: NPS, ESRI, US Census Bureau, NRI  
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Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT



14 May 2015

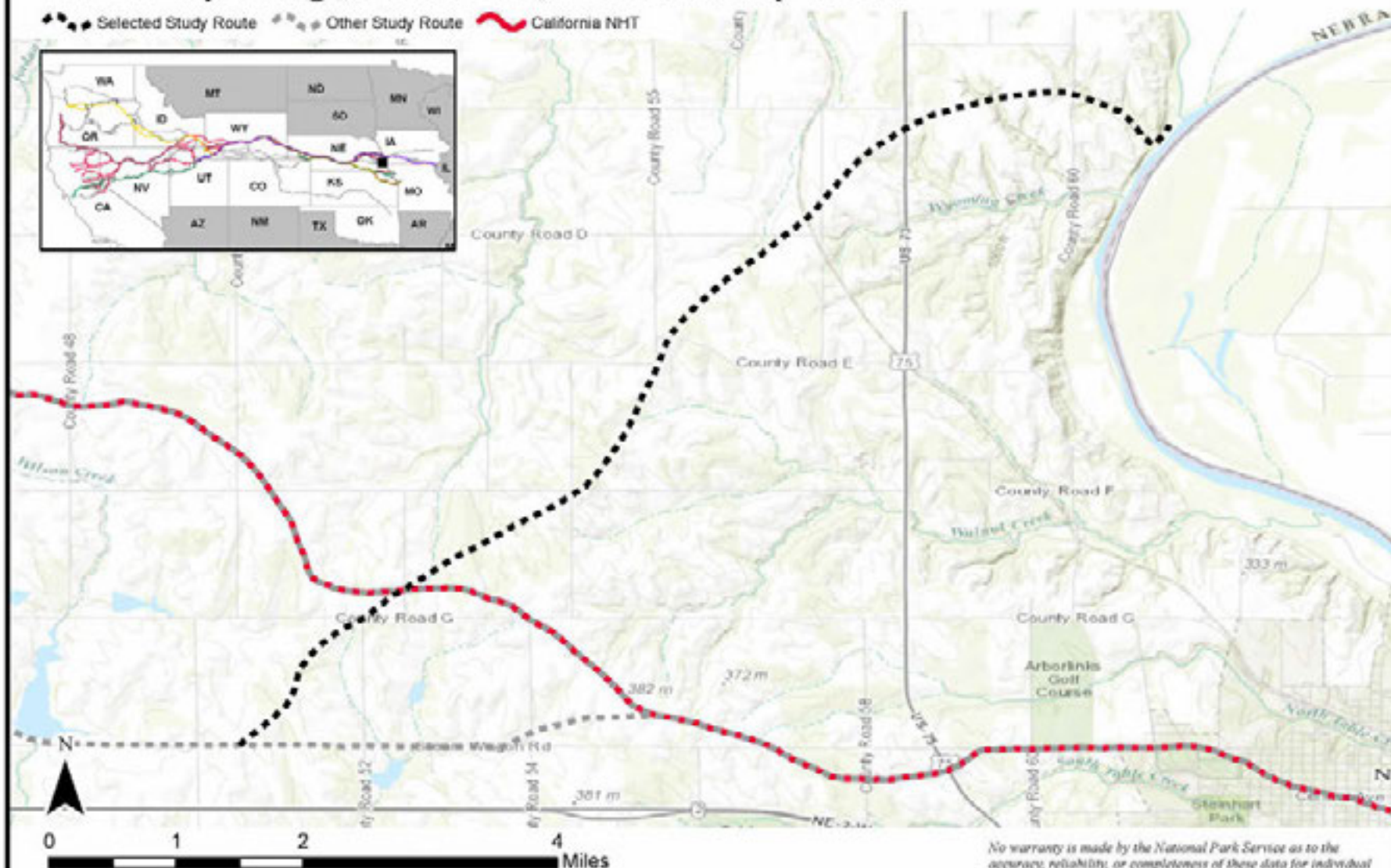
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## 21. Old Wyoming (Road to the) Nebraska City Cutoff

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT



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Selected Study Route  Mormon Pioneer NHT



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14 May 2015

PUBLN: 40crack. N. Six 11 Nov 2015. CCM

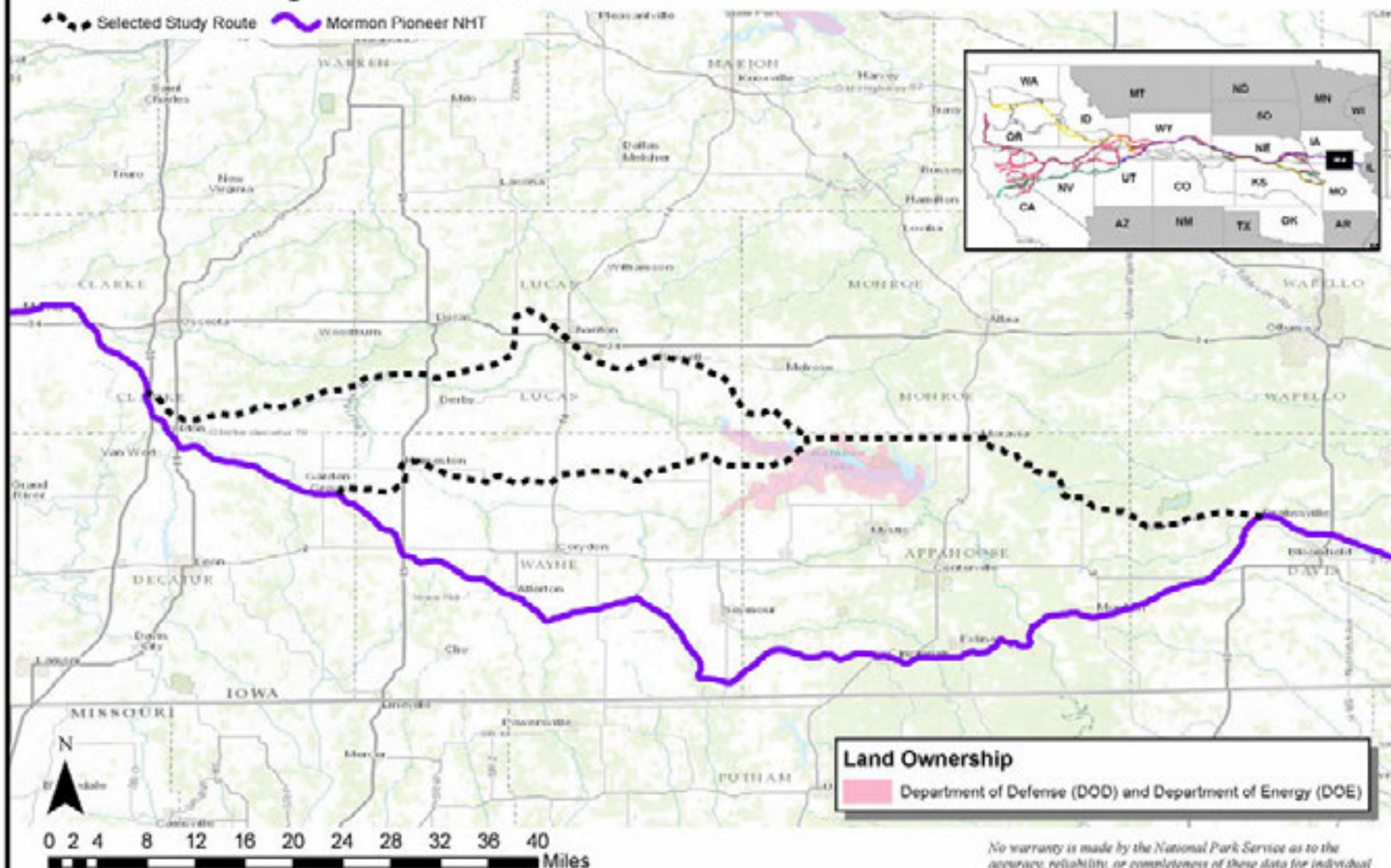
Data Sources: NPS, ESPO, US Census Bureau, NREL





## 23. 1846 Subsequent Routes A and B

Selected Study Route Mormon Pioneer NHT



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Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NMEL

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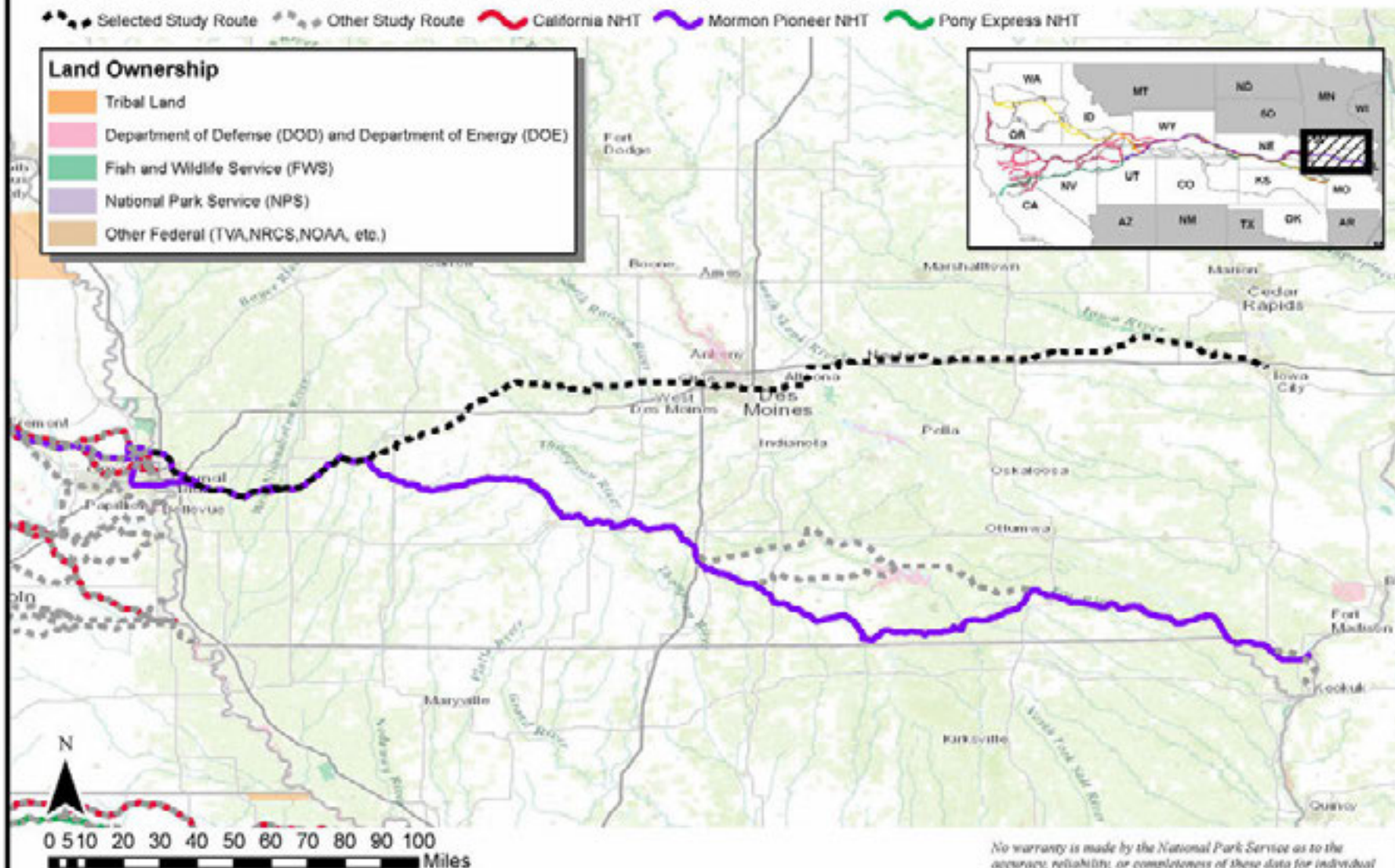


## 24. 1856-1857 Handcart Route, Iowa City to Council Bluffs

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT Mormon Pioneer NHT Pony Express NHT

### Land Ownership

- Tribal Land
- Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of Energy (DOE)
- Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
- National Park Service (NPS)
- Other Federal (TVA, NRCS, NOAA, etc.)



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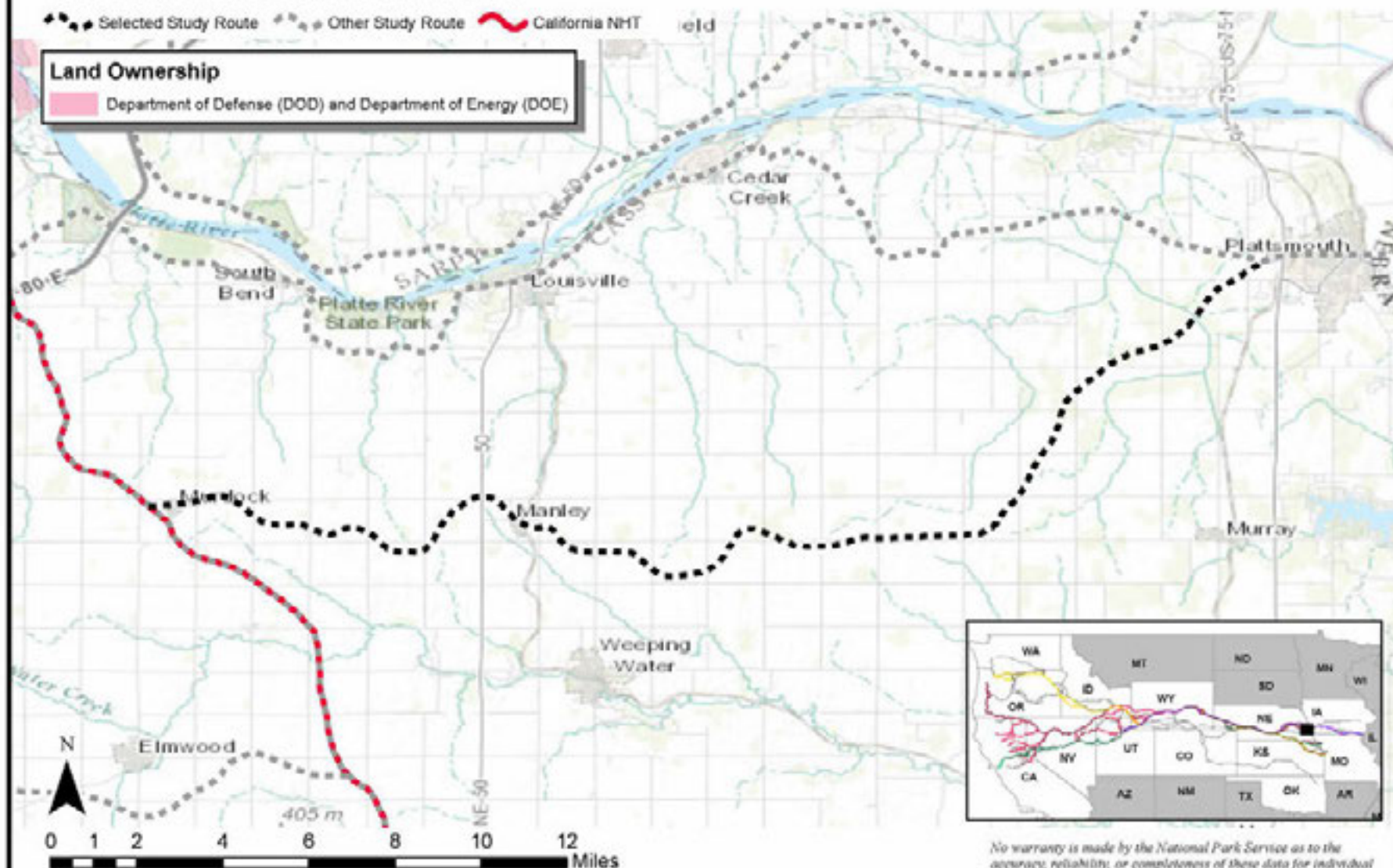
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## 25. Lower Plattsmouth Route



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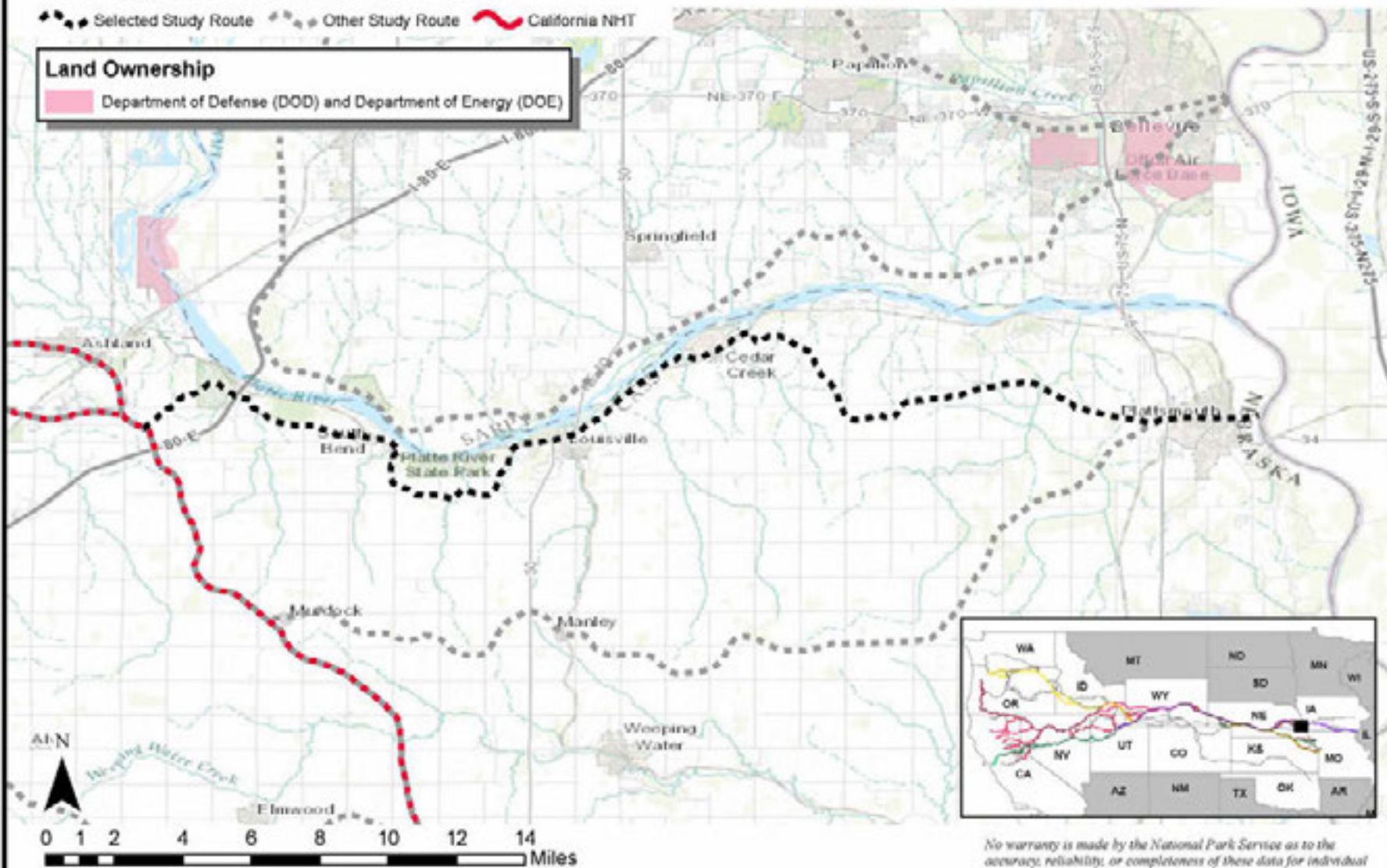


## 26. Upper Plattsmouth Route

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT

### Land Ownership

Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of Energy (DOE)



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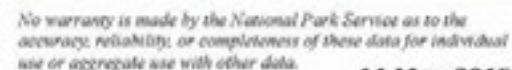
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Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NREL



Selected Study Route   Other Study Route   California NHT   Mormon Pioneer NHT



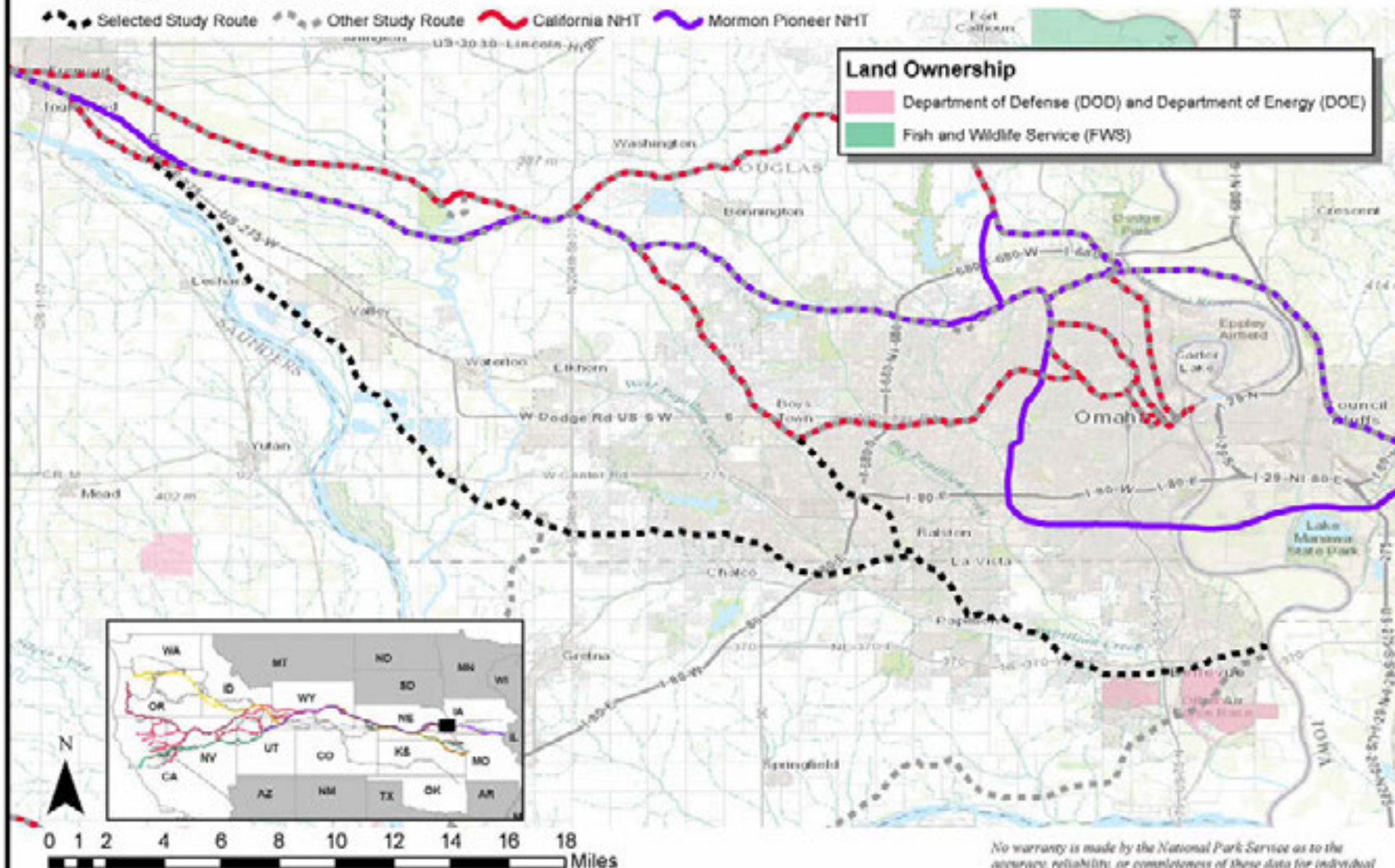
14 May 2015

Data Sources: NPS, ESPO, US Census Bureau, NREL





## 28. Upper Bellevue Route



14 May 2015

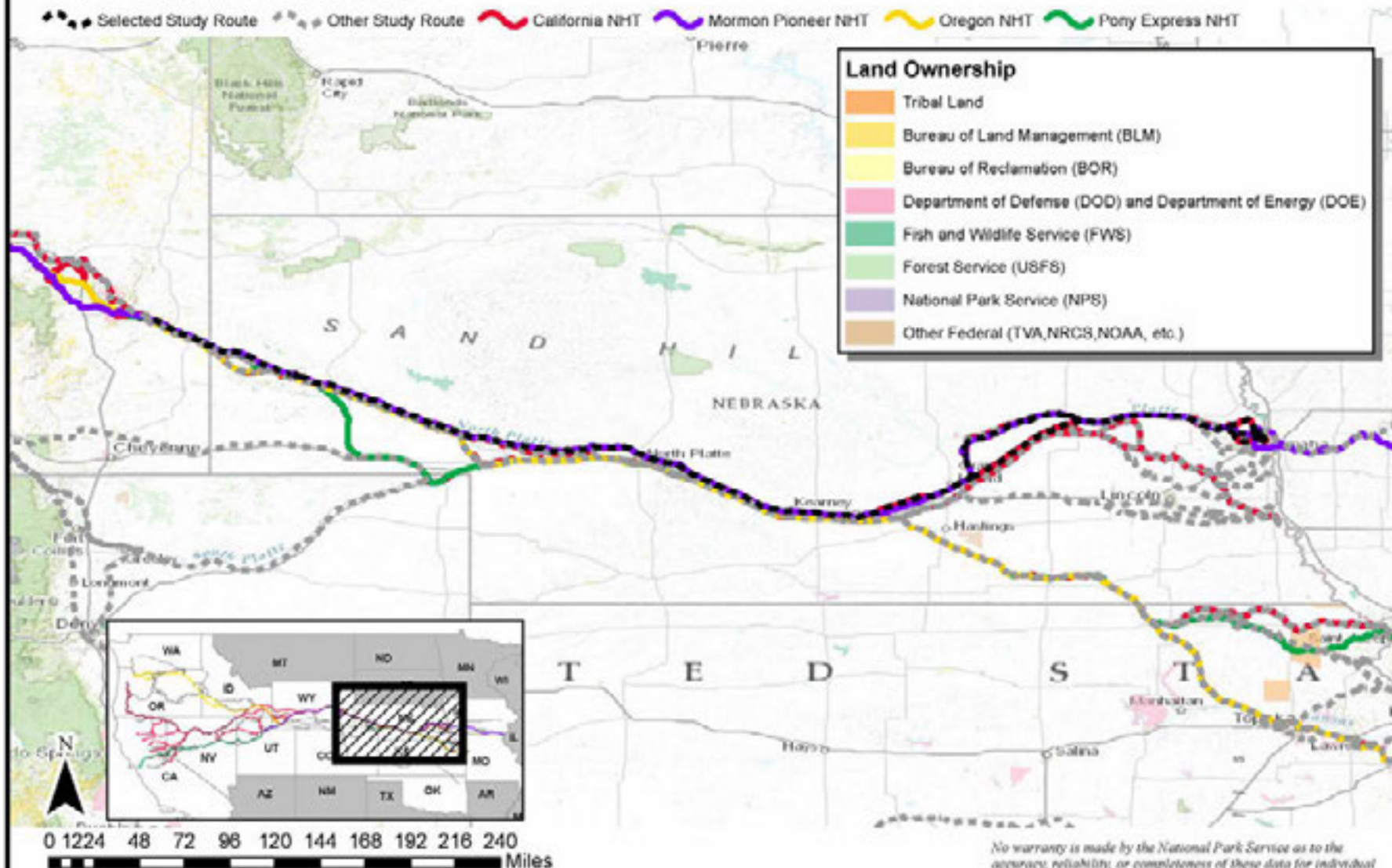
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Selected Study Route   Other Study Route   California NHT   Mormon Pioneer NHT   Oregon NHT   Pony Express NHT



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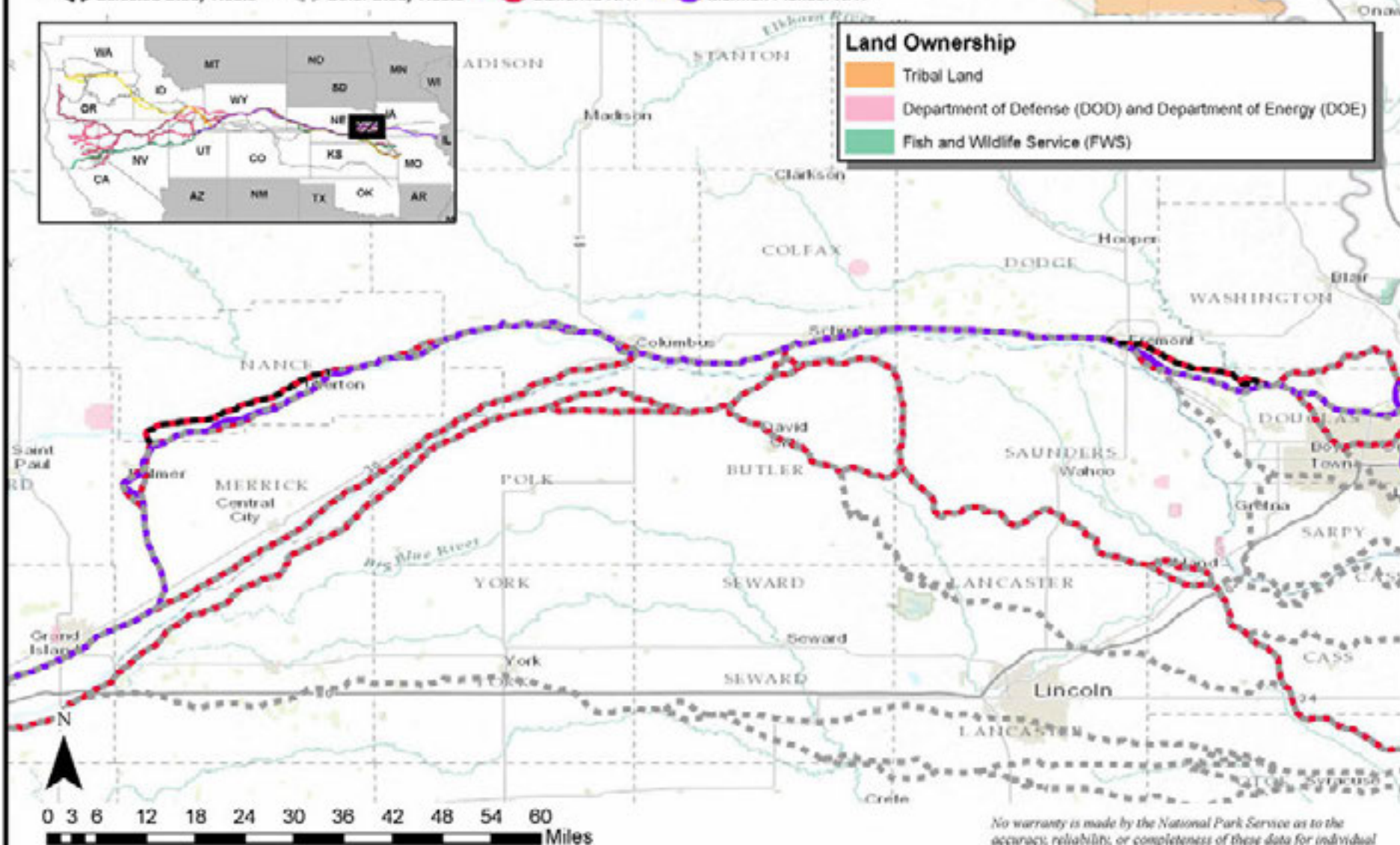
## 30. 1847 Alternative Elkhorn and Loup River Crossings in Nebraska

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT Mormon Pioneer NHT



### Land Ownership

- Tribal Land
- Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of Energy (DOE)
- Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)



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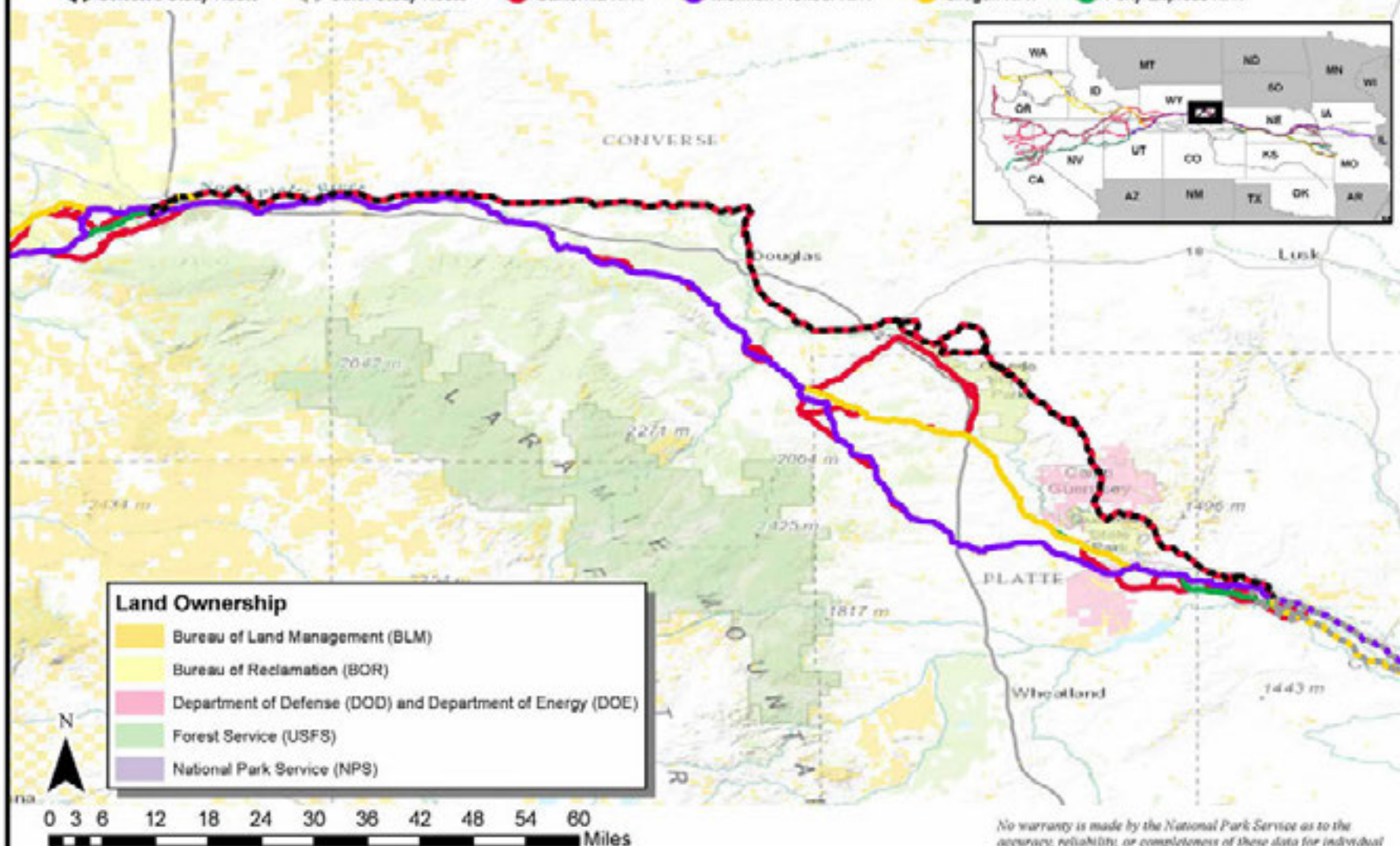
Data Sources: NPS, ESRI, US Census Bureau, NREL





## 31. Childs Cutoff

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT Mormon Pioneer NHT Oregon NHT Pony Express NHT



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FILE: 48406\_8\_Six11June\_2015\_DOP

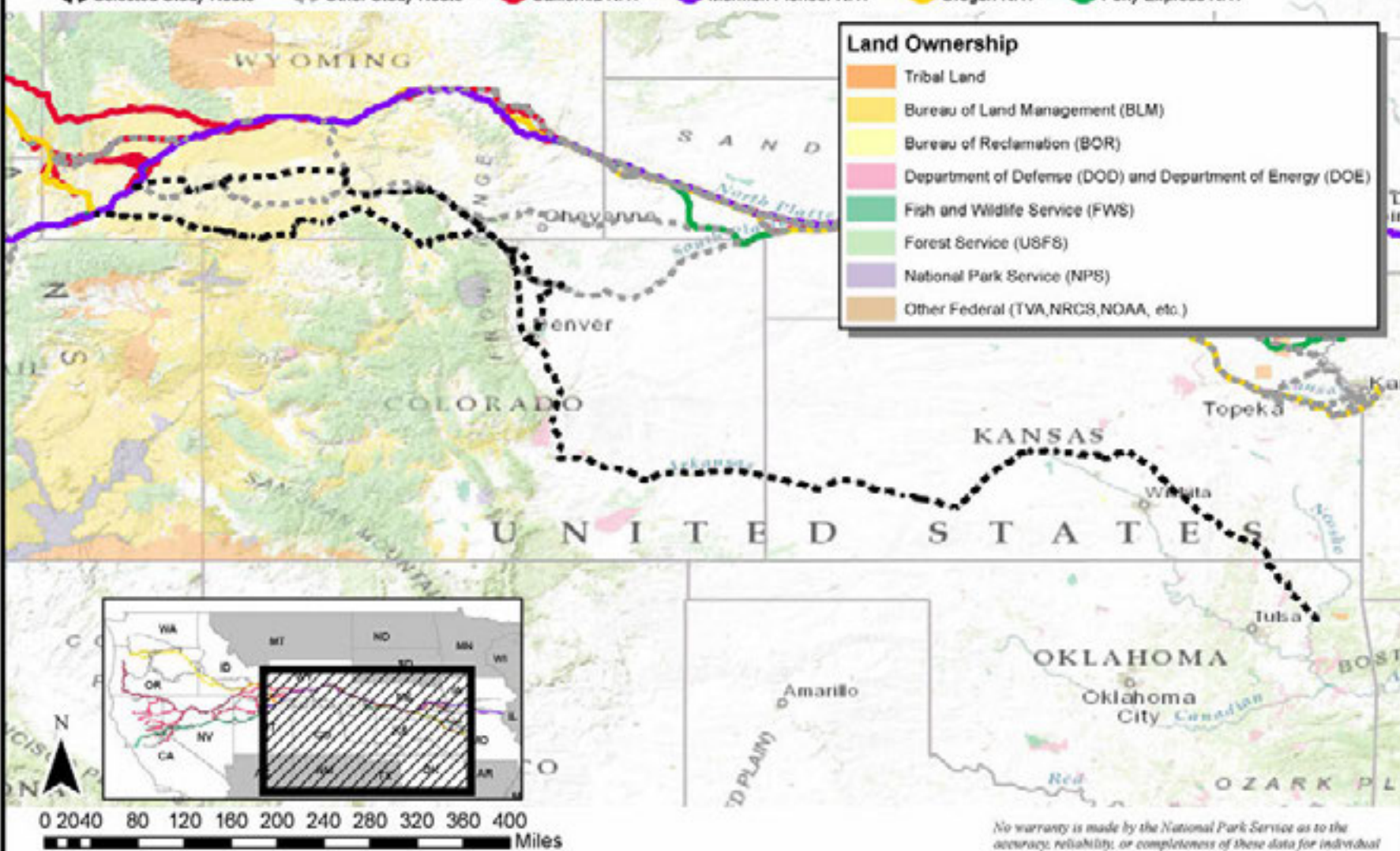
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, Geobase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, MapboxIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NREL



## 32A. Cherokee Trail - Original Study Route

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT Mormon Pioneer NHT Oregon NHT Pony Express NHT



No warranty is made by the National Park Service as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.

14 May 2015

Produced by National Trails Intermountain Region

FILE: 48046\_8\_Six11June\_2015\_DCP

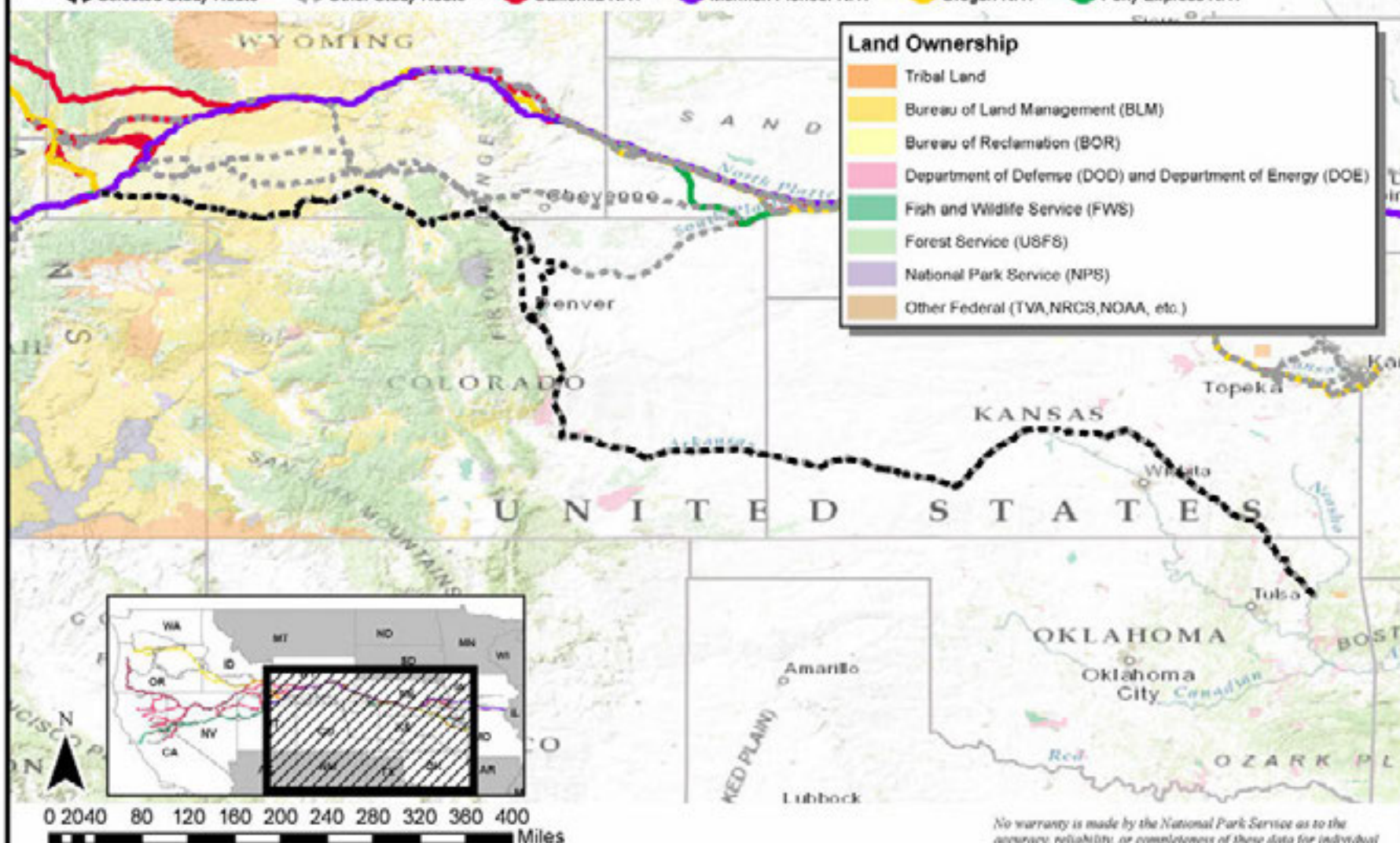
Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NREL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, MapboxIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community





## 32B. Cherokee Trail - 1850 Southern Route

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT Mormon Pioneer NHT Oregon NHT Pony Express NHT



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14 May 2015

Produced by National Trails Intermountain Region

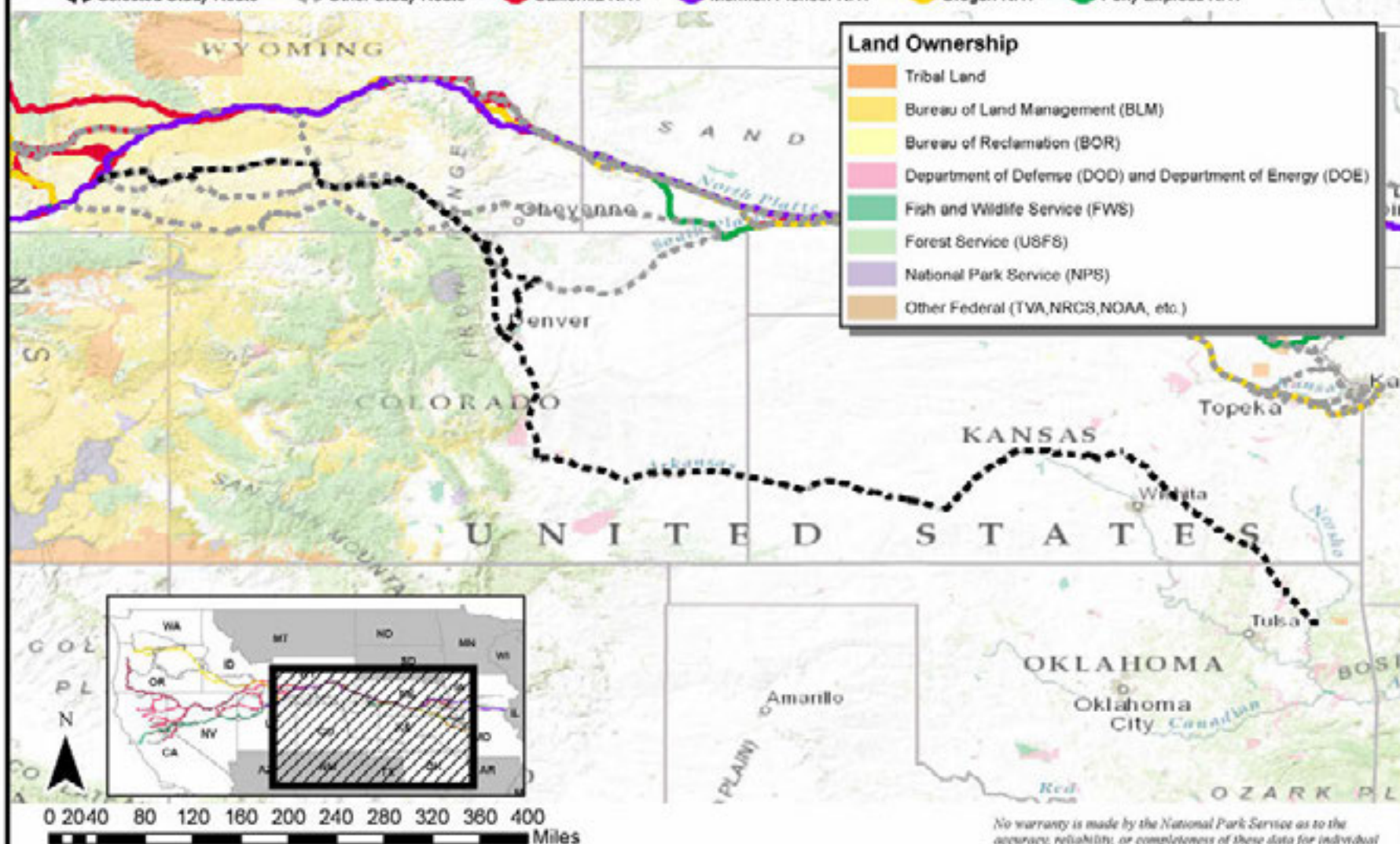
FILE: 4804h\_8\_Sx110and\_2015\_COP

Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NREL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, Geobase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, MapboxIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



## 32C. Cherokee Trail - 1849 Northern Route

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT Mormon Pioneer NHT Oregon NHT Pony Express NHT



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Produced by National Trails Intermountain Region

FILE: 49a06\_8\_Sx110and\_2015\_COP

Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NREL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, MapboxIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



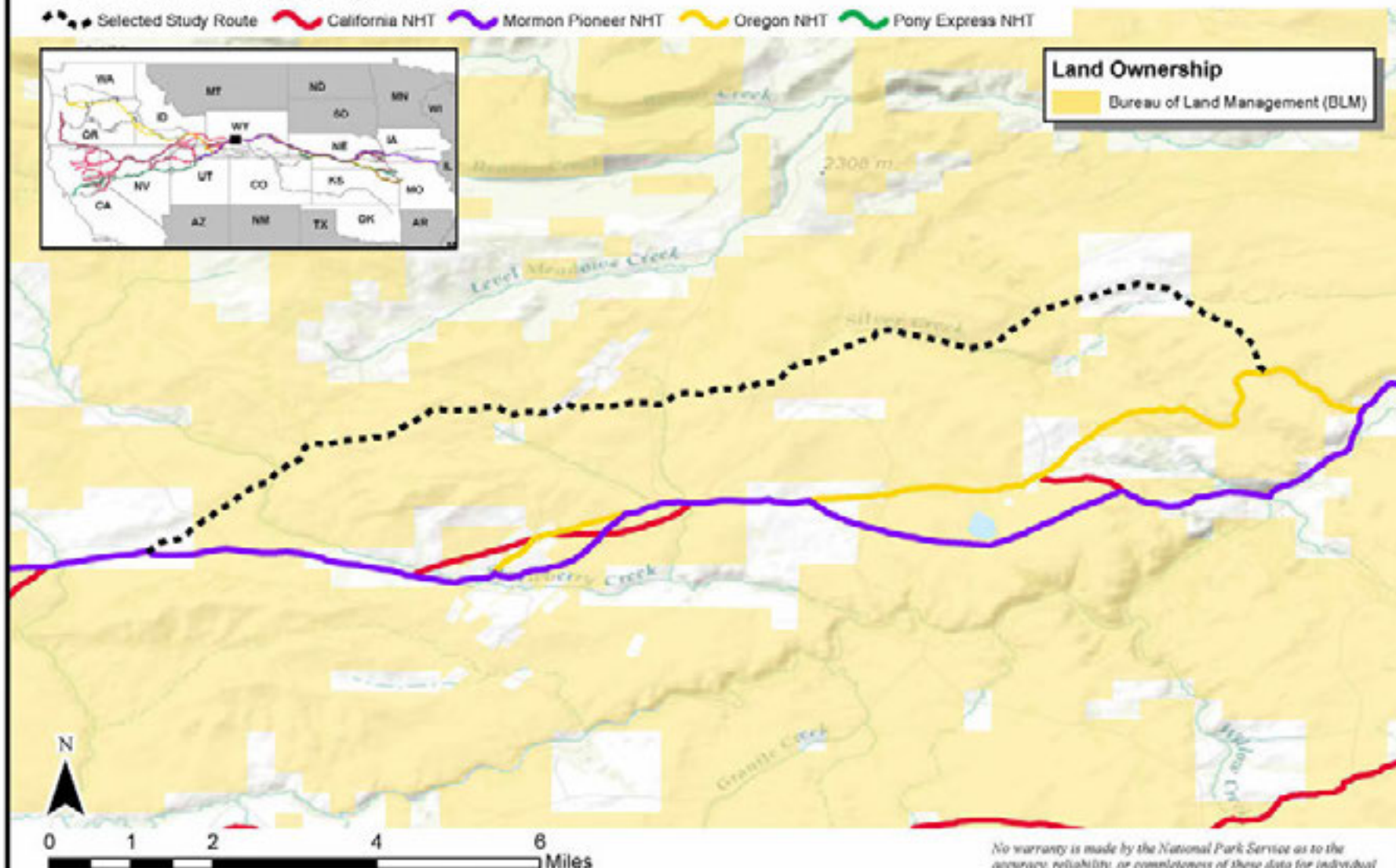


### 33. Diamond Springs Cutoff

Selected Study Route California NHT Mormon Pioneer NHT Oregon NHT Pony Express NHT



**Land Ownership**  
Bureau of Land Management (BLM)



No warranty is made by the National Park Service as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.

14 May 2015

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FILE: 48u06\_8\_Sx110and\_2015\_COP

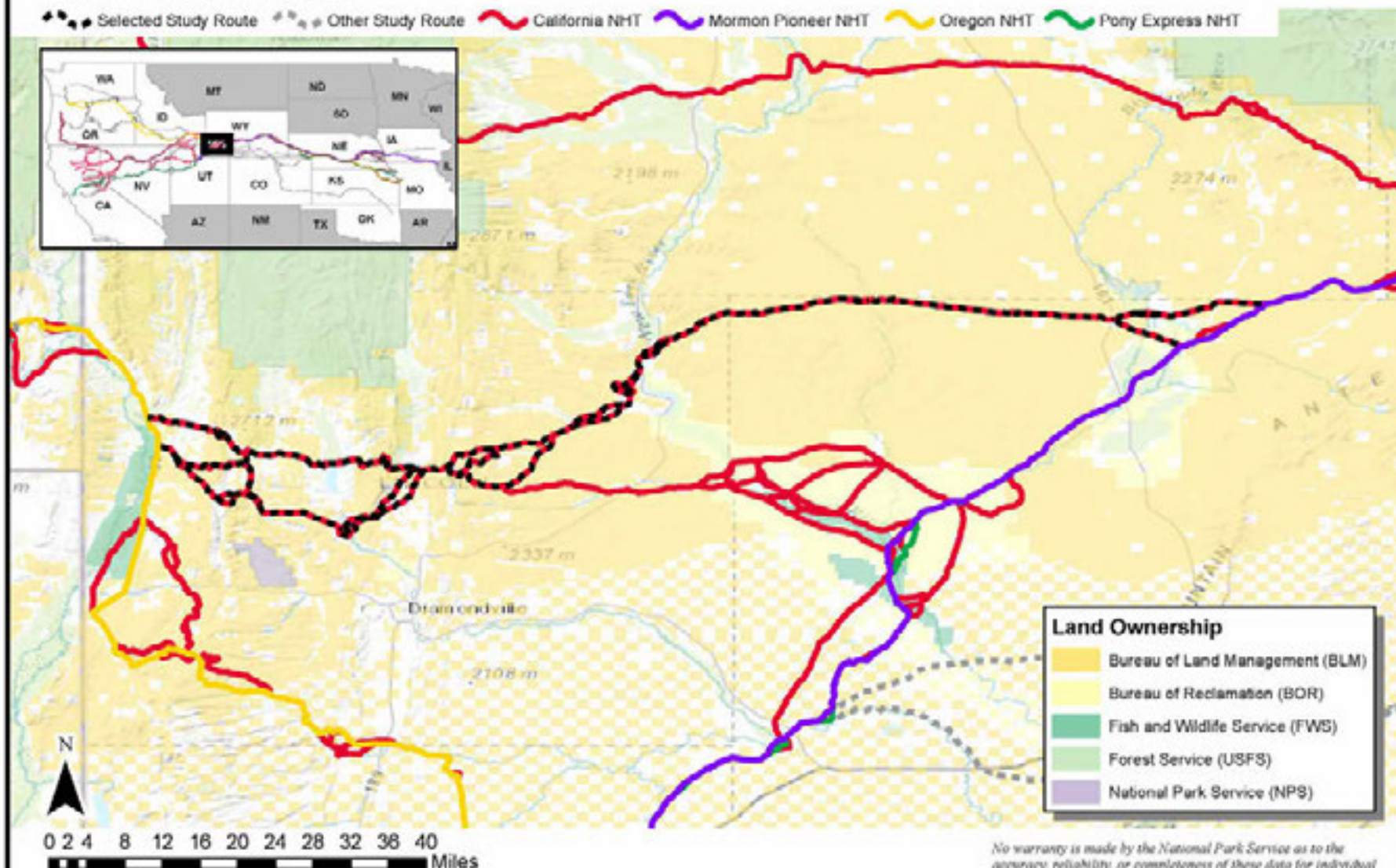
Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NREL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, MapboxIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community





## 34. Sublette Cutoff

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT Mormon Pioneer NHT Oregon NHT Pony Express NHT



Land Ownership	
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:yellow; border:1px solid black;"></span>	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightyellow; border:1px solid black;"></span>	Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightgreen; border:1px solid black;"></span>	Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightblue; border:1px solid black;"></span>	Forest Service (USFS)
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightpurple; border:1px solid black;"></span>	National Park Service (NPS)

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14 May 2015

Produced by National Trails Intermountain Region

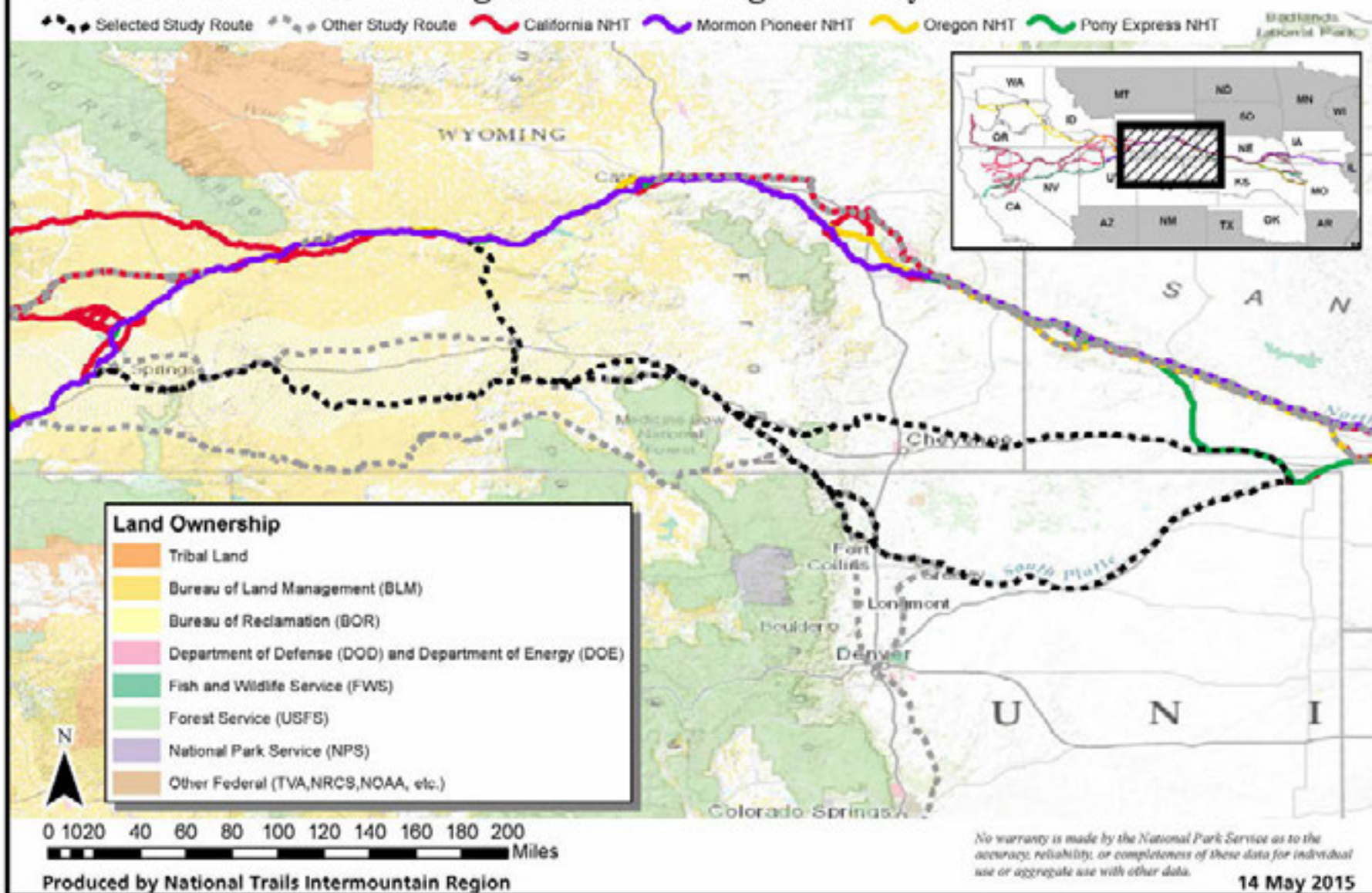
FILE: 49a06\_8\_Sx110and\_2015\_COP

Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NMEL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, Geobase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, MapboxIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community





## 35A. Central Overland Emigrant Route - Original Study Routes



FILE: 48a06\_8\_8x11June\_2015\_COP

Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NMEL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, Geobase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, MapboxIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

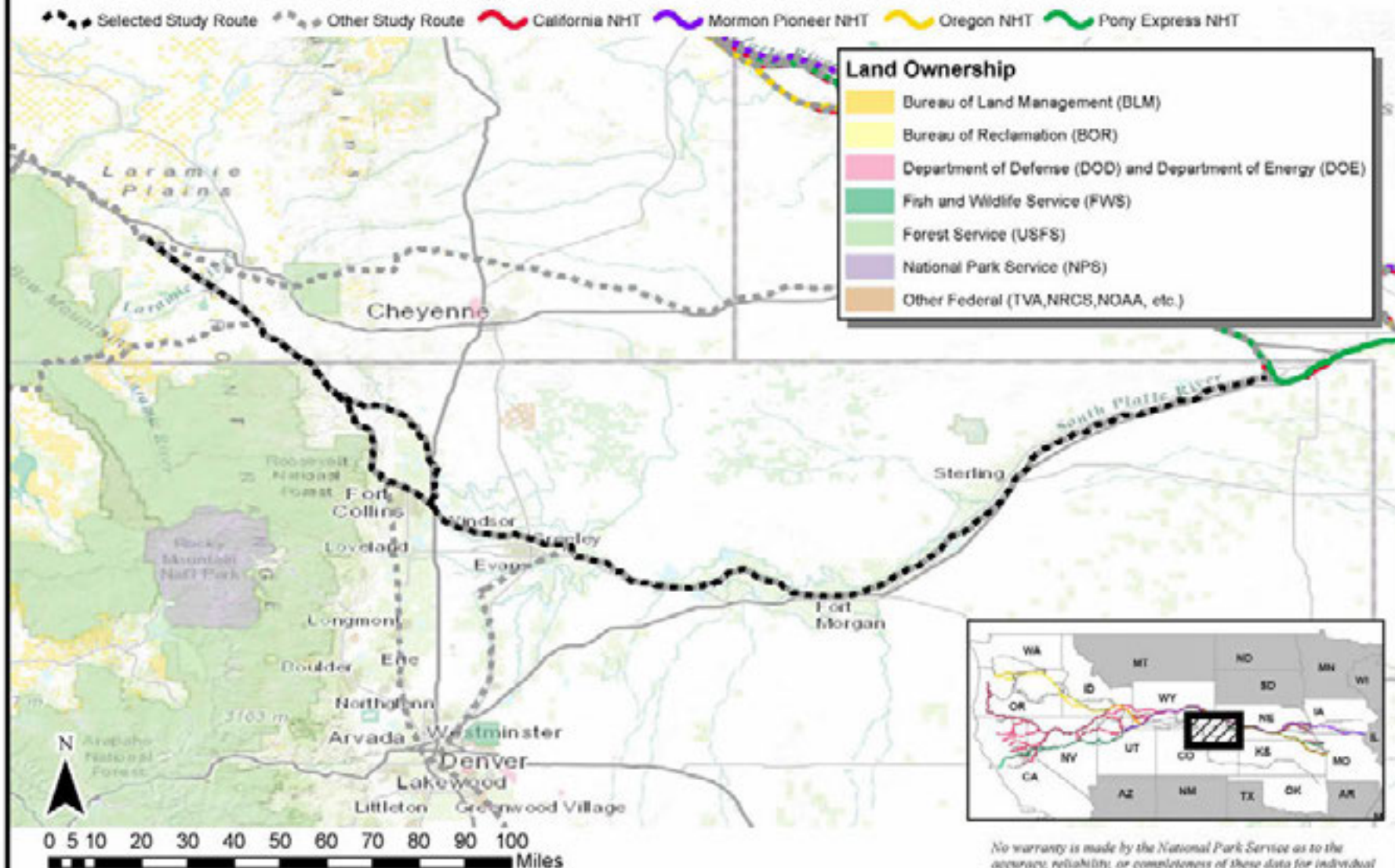


## 35B. Central Overland Emigrant Route - South Platte River Route

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT Mormon Pioneer NHT Oregon NHT Pony Express NHT

### Land Ownership

- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)
- Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of Energy (DOE)
- Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
- Forest Service (USFS)
- National Park Service (NPS)
- Other Federal (TVA, NRCS, NOAA, etc.)



No warranty is made by the National Park Service as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.

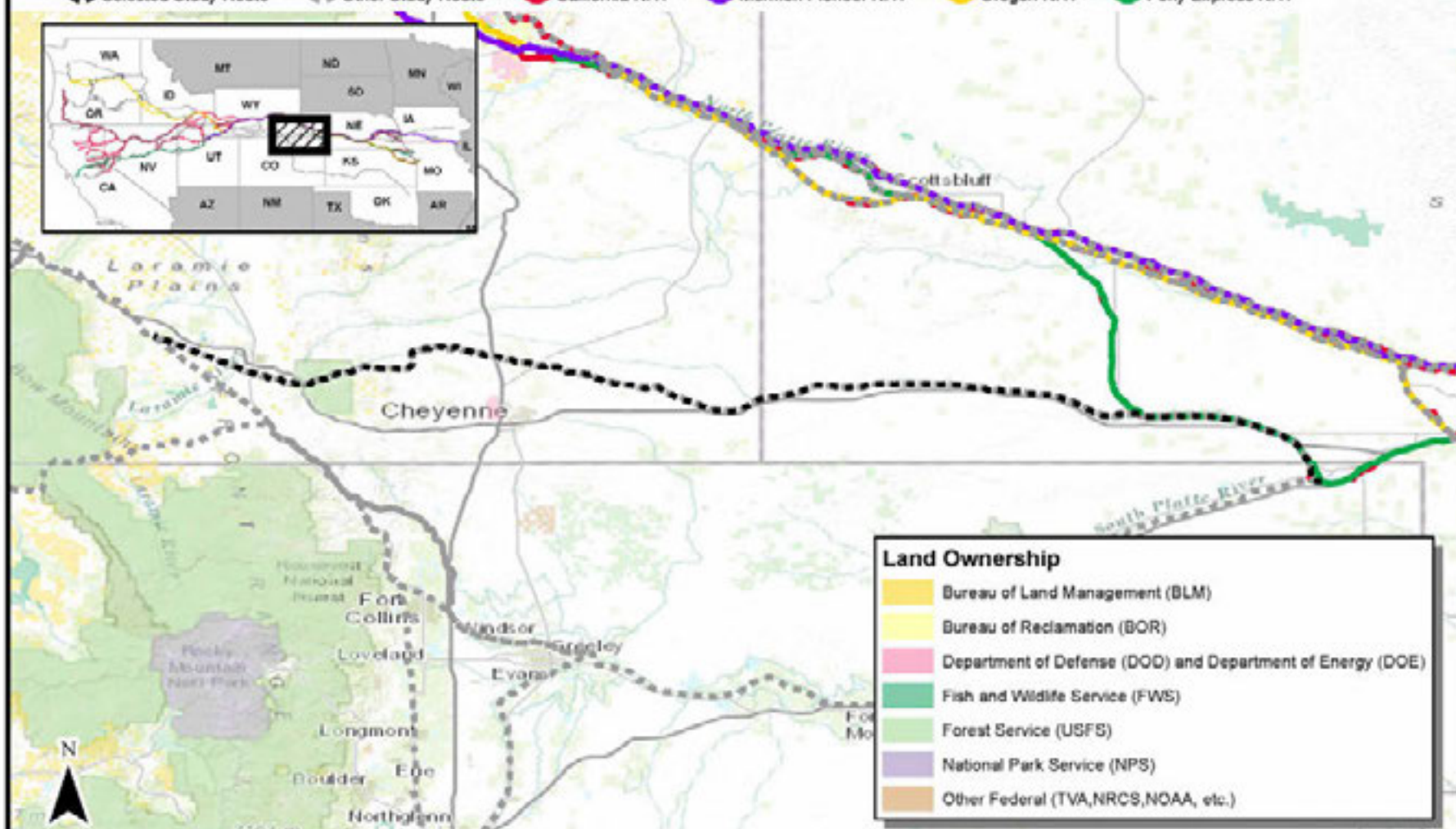
14 May 2015





## 35C. Central Overland Emigrant Route - Lodgepole Creek Trail

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT Mormon Pioneer NHT Oregon NHT Pony Express NHT



Land Ownership	
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<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightyellow; border:1px solid black;"></span>	Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightpink; border:1px solid black;"></span>	Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of Energy (DOE)
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightgreen; border:1px solid black;"></span>	Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightblue; border:1px solid black;"></span>	Forest Service (USFS)
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<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightorange; border:1px solid black;"></span>	Other Federal (TVA, NRCS, NOAA, etc.)



0 5 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 Miles

Produced by National Trails Intermountain Region

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14 May 2015

FILE: 48046\_8\_Sk1110nd\_2015\_COP

Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NMEL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, Mapbox India, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



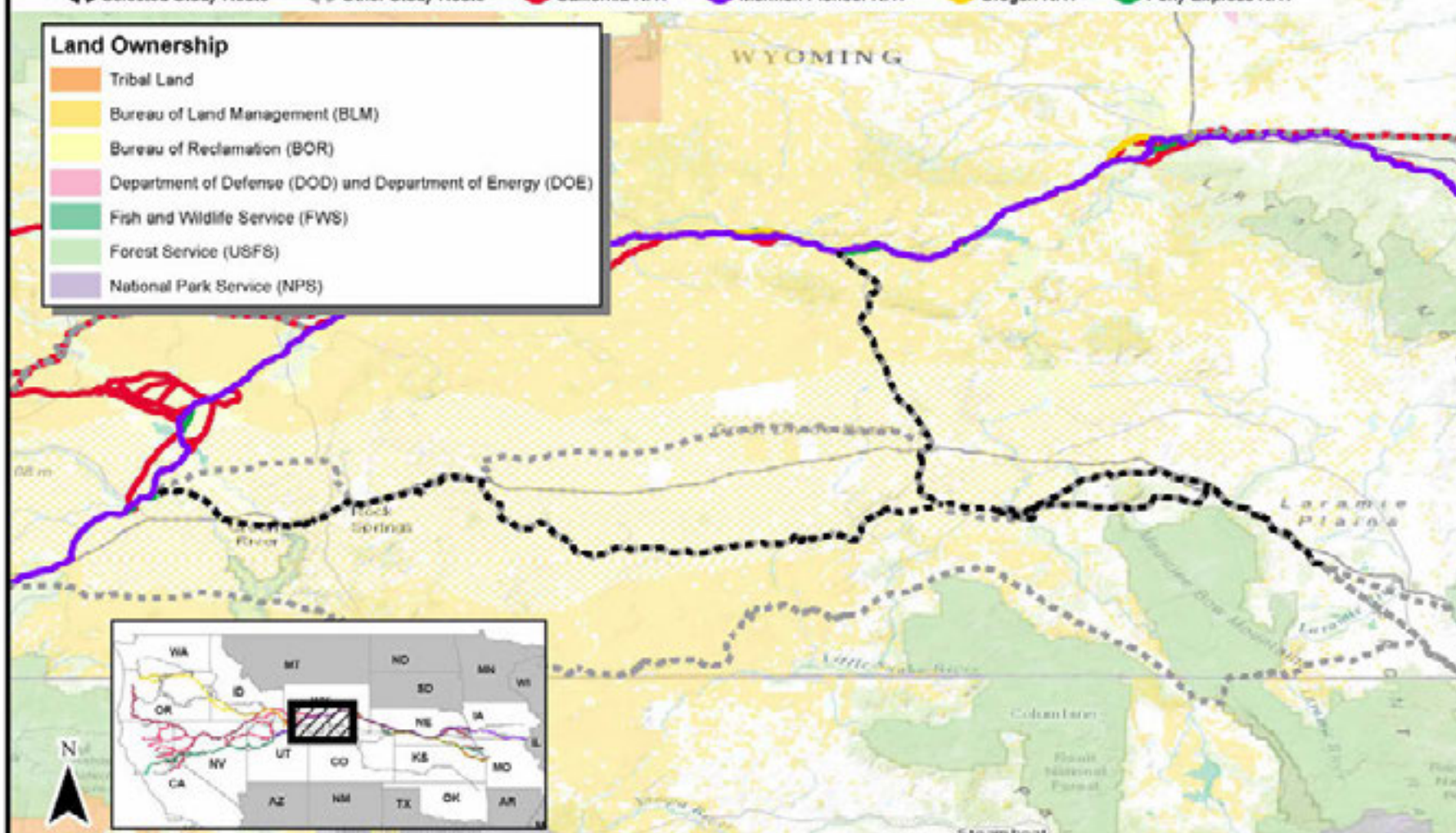


## 35D. Central Overland Emigrant Route - Selected Sections through Wyoming

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT Mormon Pioneer NHT Oregon NHT Pony Express NHT

### Land Ownership

- Tribal Land
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)
- Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of Energy (DOE)
- Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
- Forest Service (USFS)
- National Park Service (NPS)



0 5 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100  
Miles

Produced by National Trails Intermountain Region

No warranty is made by the National Park Service as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.

14 May 2015

FILE: 48406\_8\_Sk1110and\_2015\_COP

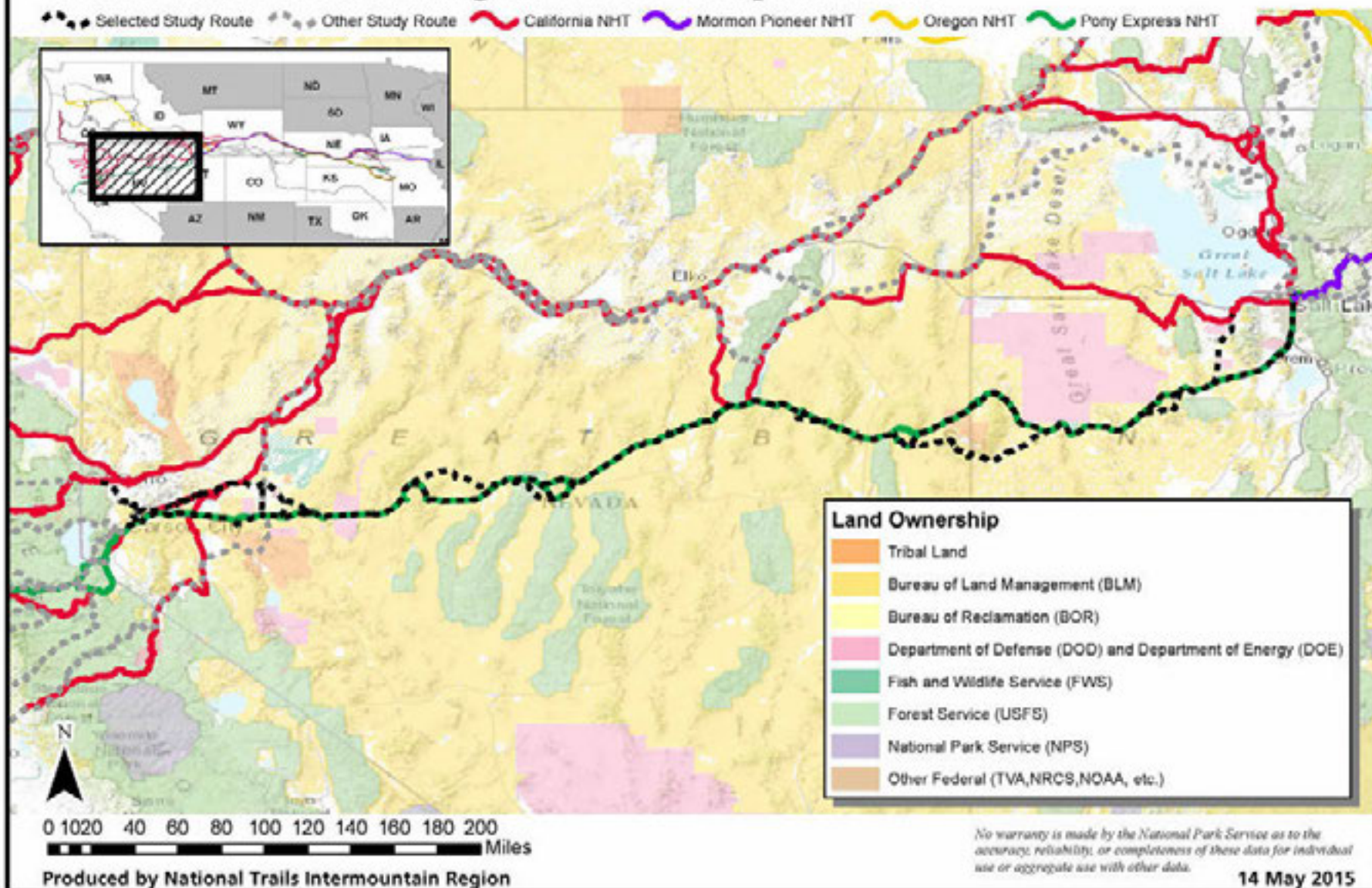
Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NREL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, Geobase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, MapboxIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community





## 35E. Central Overland Emigrant Route - Simpson Route

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT Mormon Pioneer NHT Oregon NHT Pony Express NHT



FILE: 48aak\_8\_Sx11land\_2015\_DCP

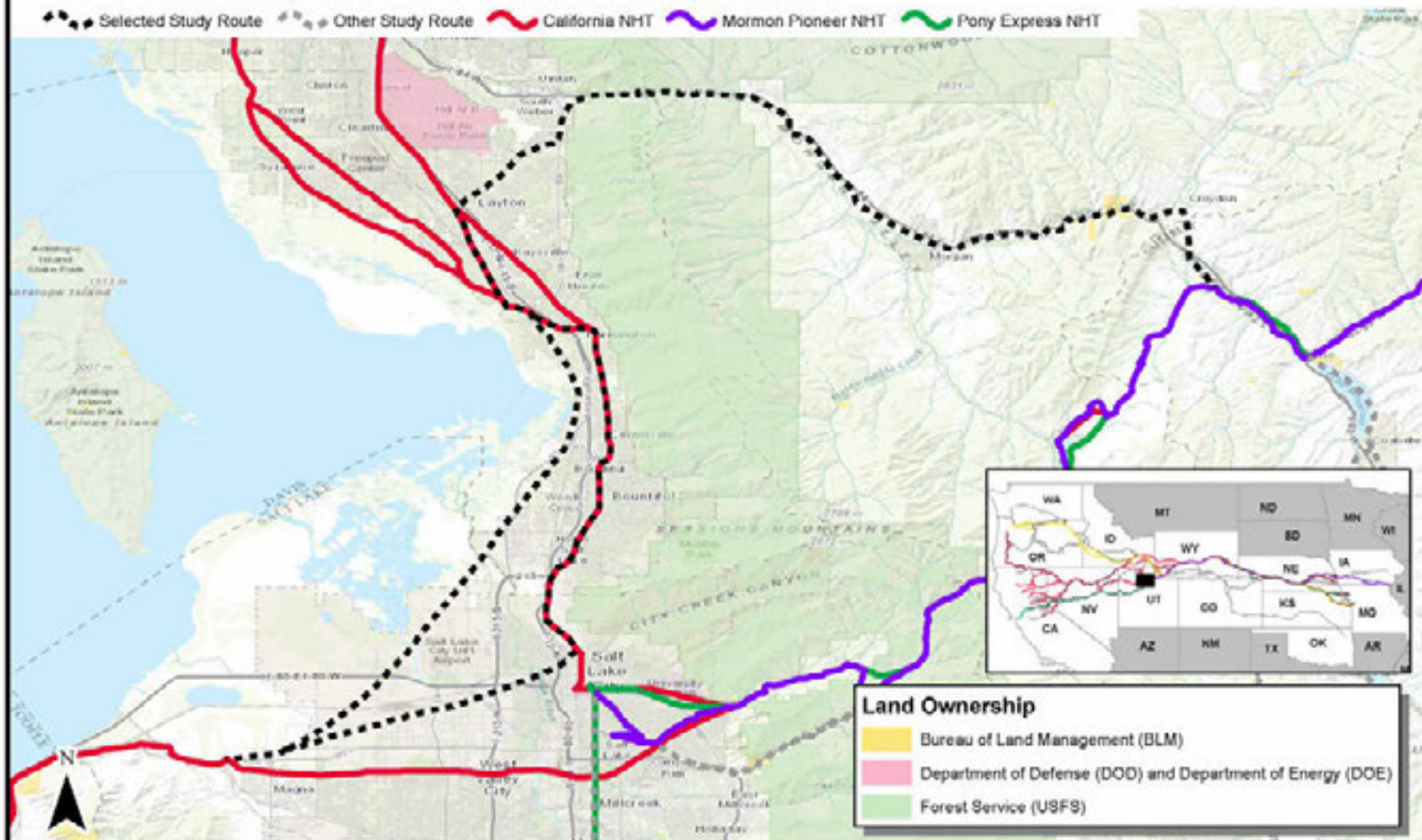
Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NMEL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, Mapbox India, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community





## 36. Weber Canyon Route of the Hastings Cutoff

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT Mormon Pioneer NHT Pony Express NHT



0 1 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20 Miles

Produced by National Trails Intermountain Region

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14 May 2015

FILE: 48aak\_8\_Sk110and\_2015\_COP

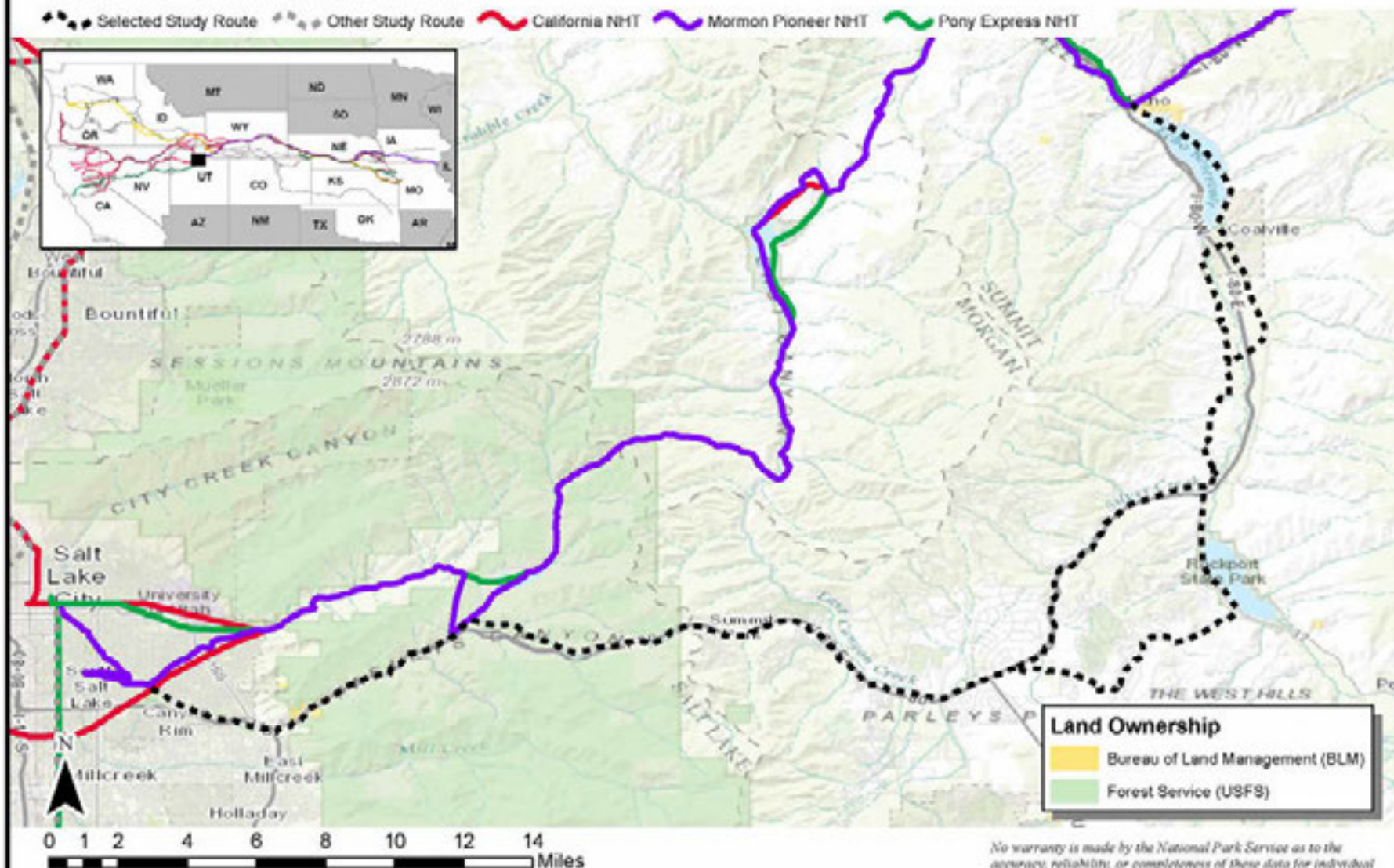
Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NMEL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, MapboxIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community





## 37. 1850 Golden Pass Road

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT Mormon Pioneer NHT Pony Express NHT



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14 May 2015

Produced by National Trails Intermountain Region

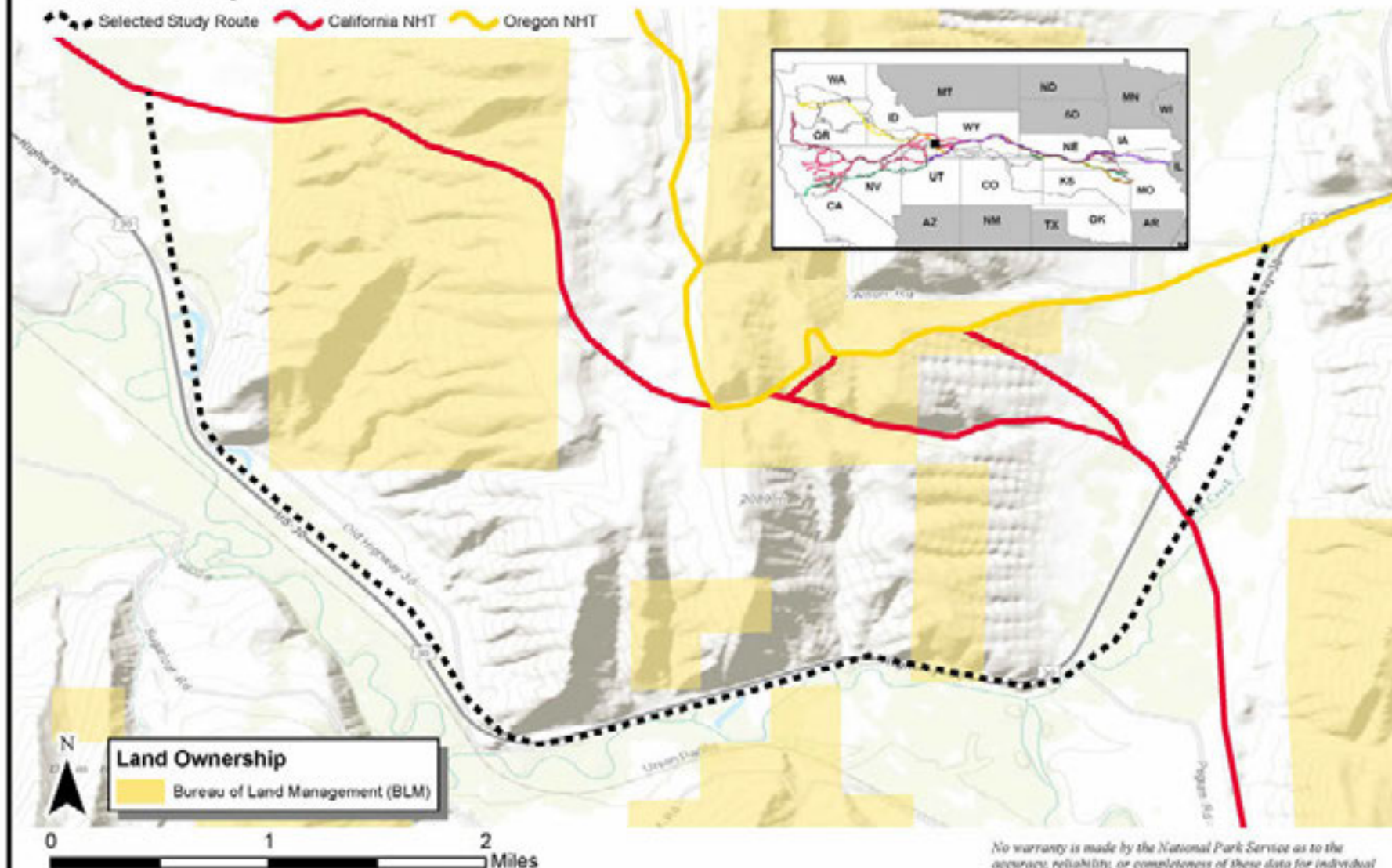
FILE: 49aak\_8\_5x11and\_2015\_DOP

Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NMEL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, MapboxIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



## 38. McAuley Cutoff

Selected Study Route California NHT Oregon NHT



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15 May 2015

Produced by National Trails Intermountain Region

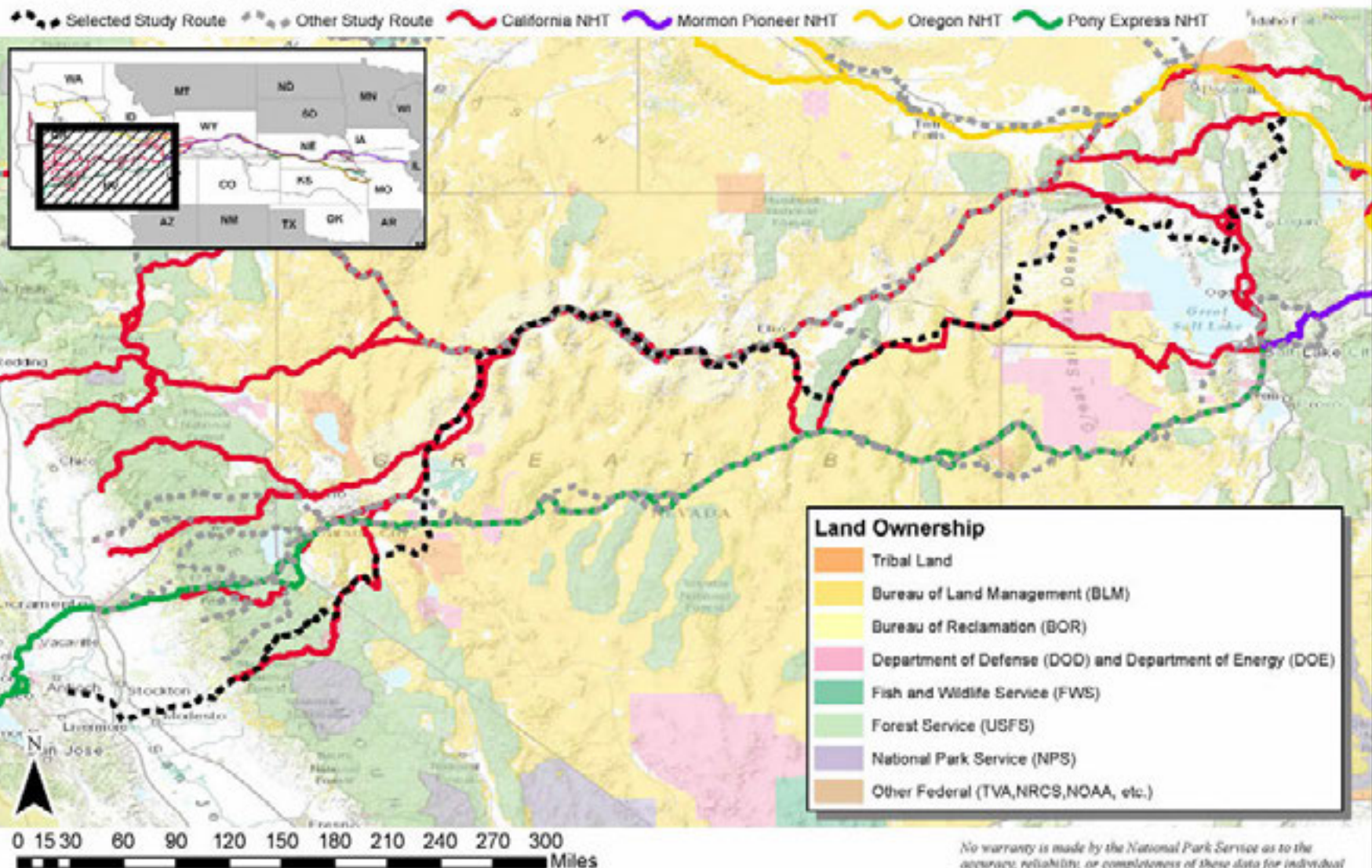
FILE: 48046\_8\_Sx1110nd\_2015\_DOP

Data Sources: NPS, BSRP, US Census Bureau, NMEL, Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, Geobase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, MapboxIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community





## 39. Bidwell-Bartleson Route



14 May 2015

FILE: 49aah\_8\_Sx11June\_2015\_COP

Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NMEL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, Mapbox India, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



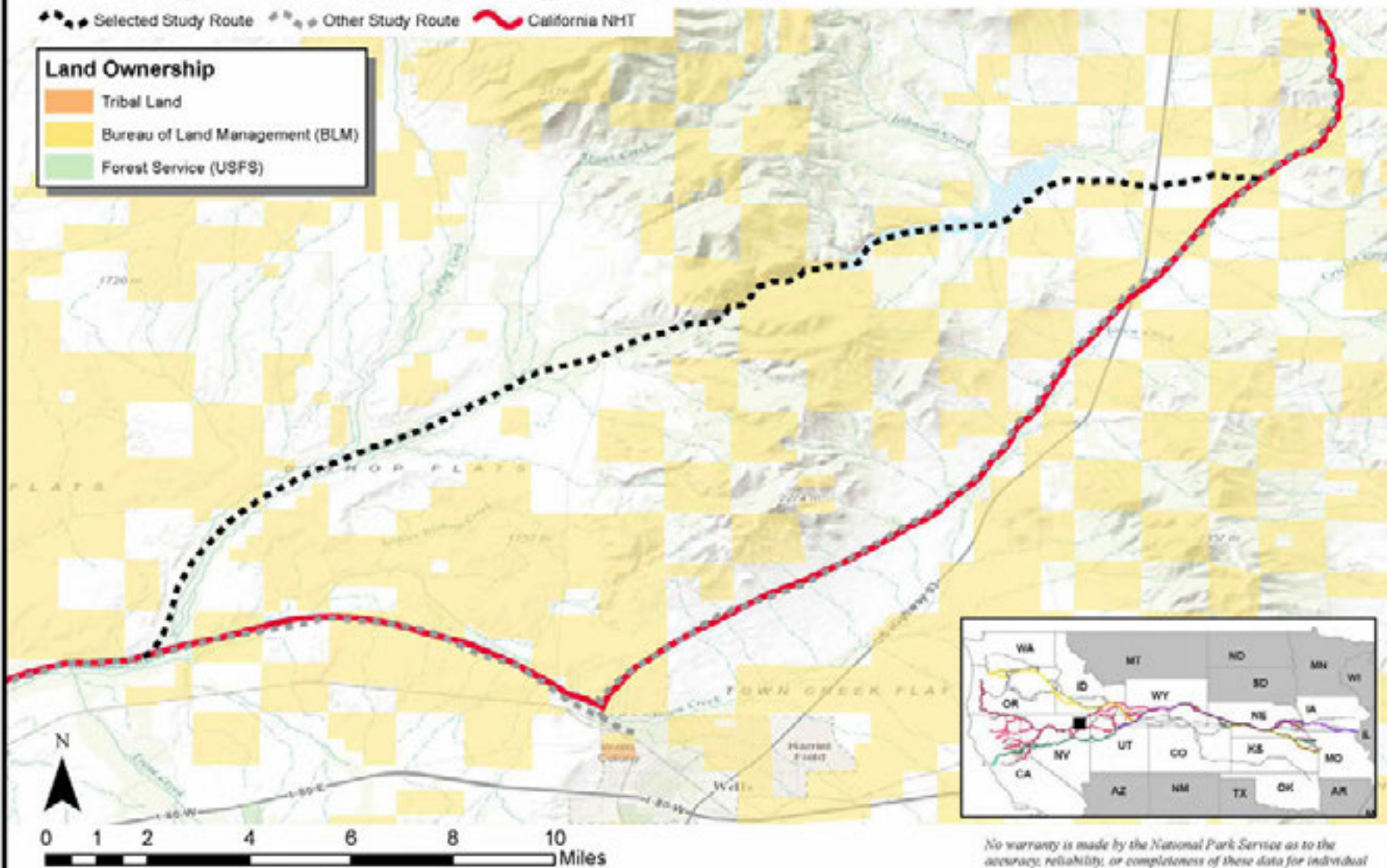


## 40. Bishop Creek Cutoff (Bishop Creek Route)

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT

### Land Ownership

- Tribal Land
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Forest Service (USFS)



No warranty is made by the National Park Service as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.

15 May 2015

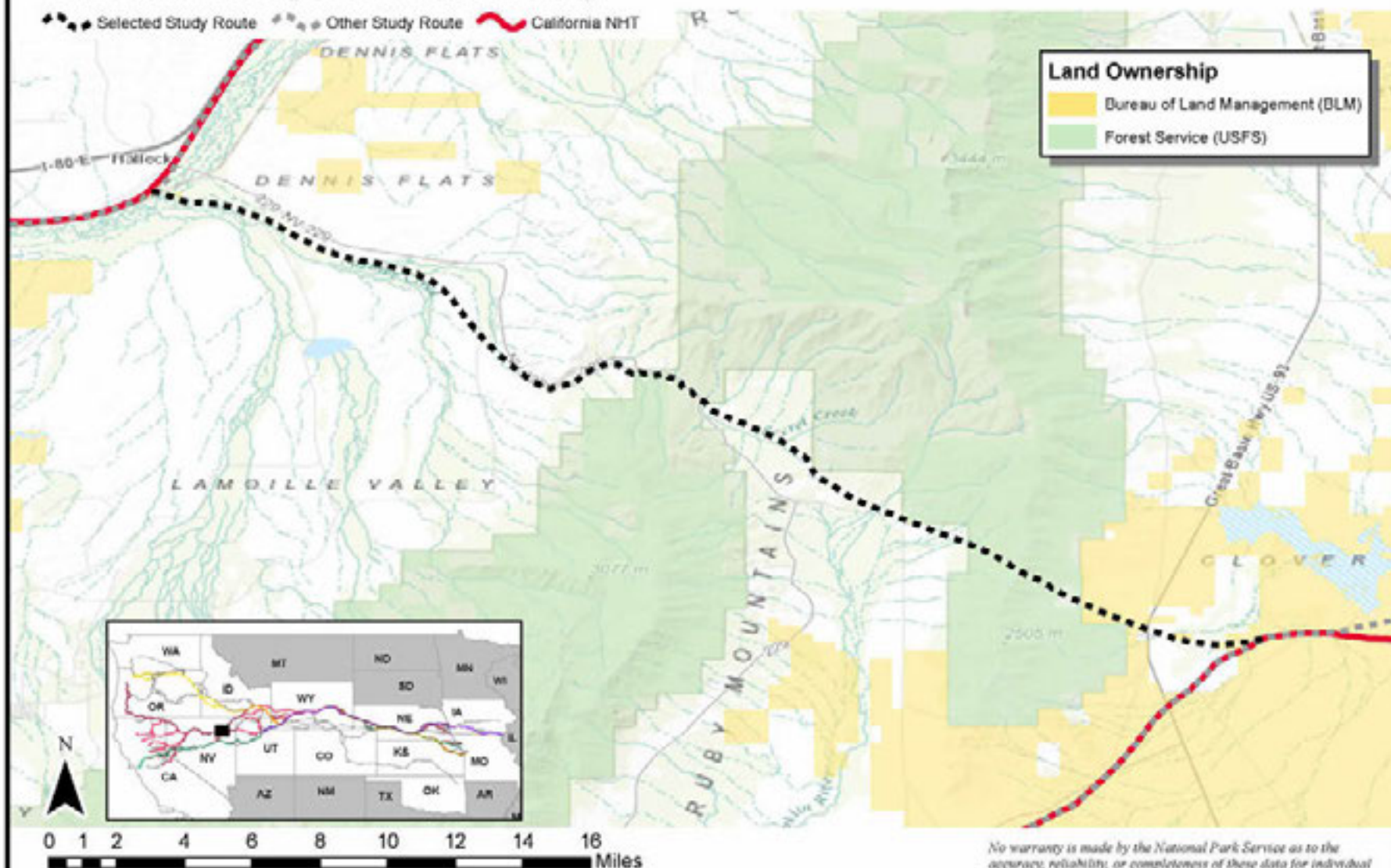
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Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, MapboxIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NREL



## 41. Secret Pass (Secret Pass Route)



15 May 2015

FILE: 48046\_8\_Sx110and\_2015\_COP

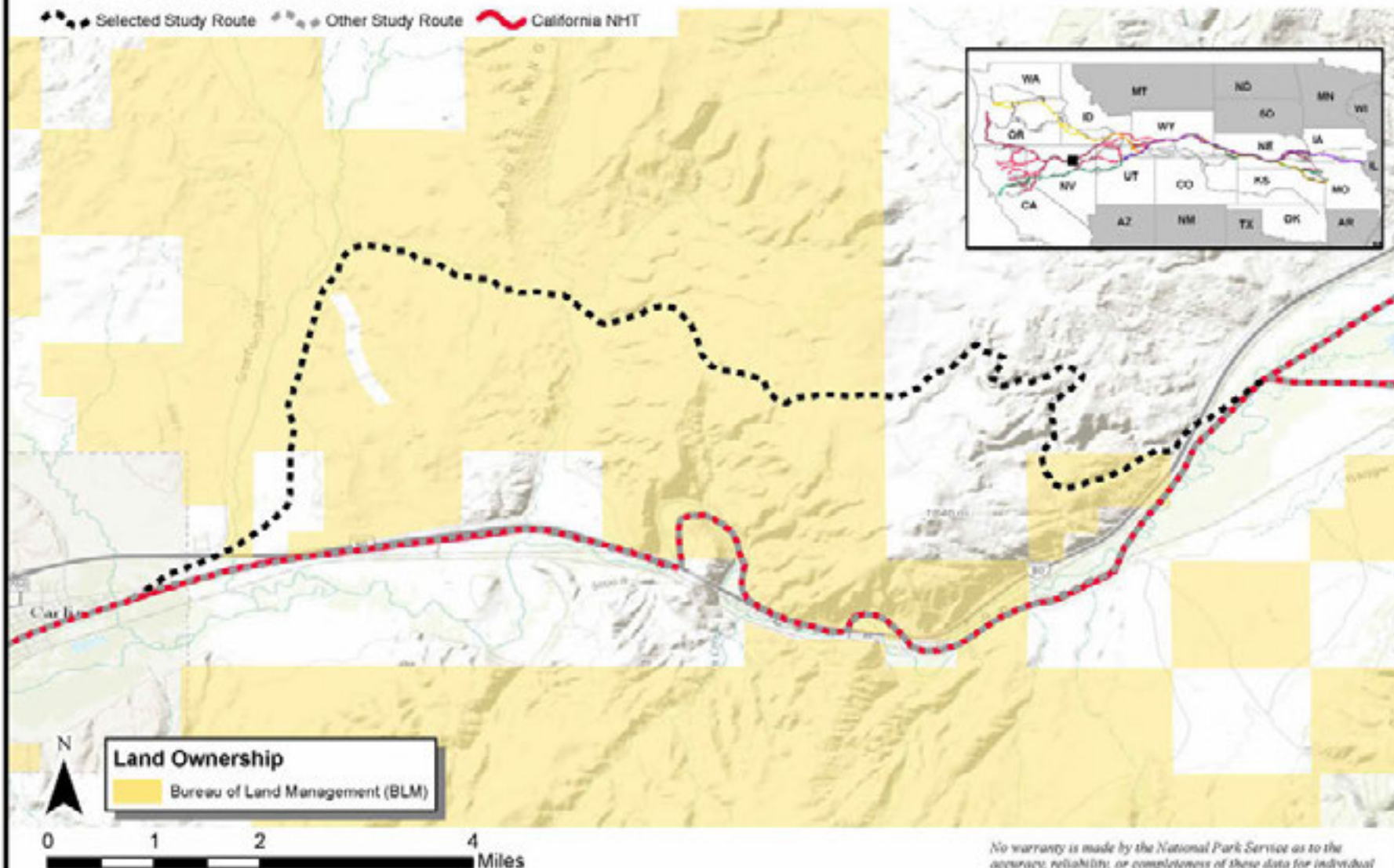
Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NMEL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, MapboxIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community





## 42. Greenhorn Cutoff

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT



No warranty is made by the National Park Service as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.

15 May 2015

Produced by National Trails Intermountain Region

FILE: 48046\_8\_Six11June\_2015\_DOP

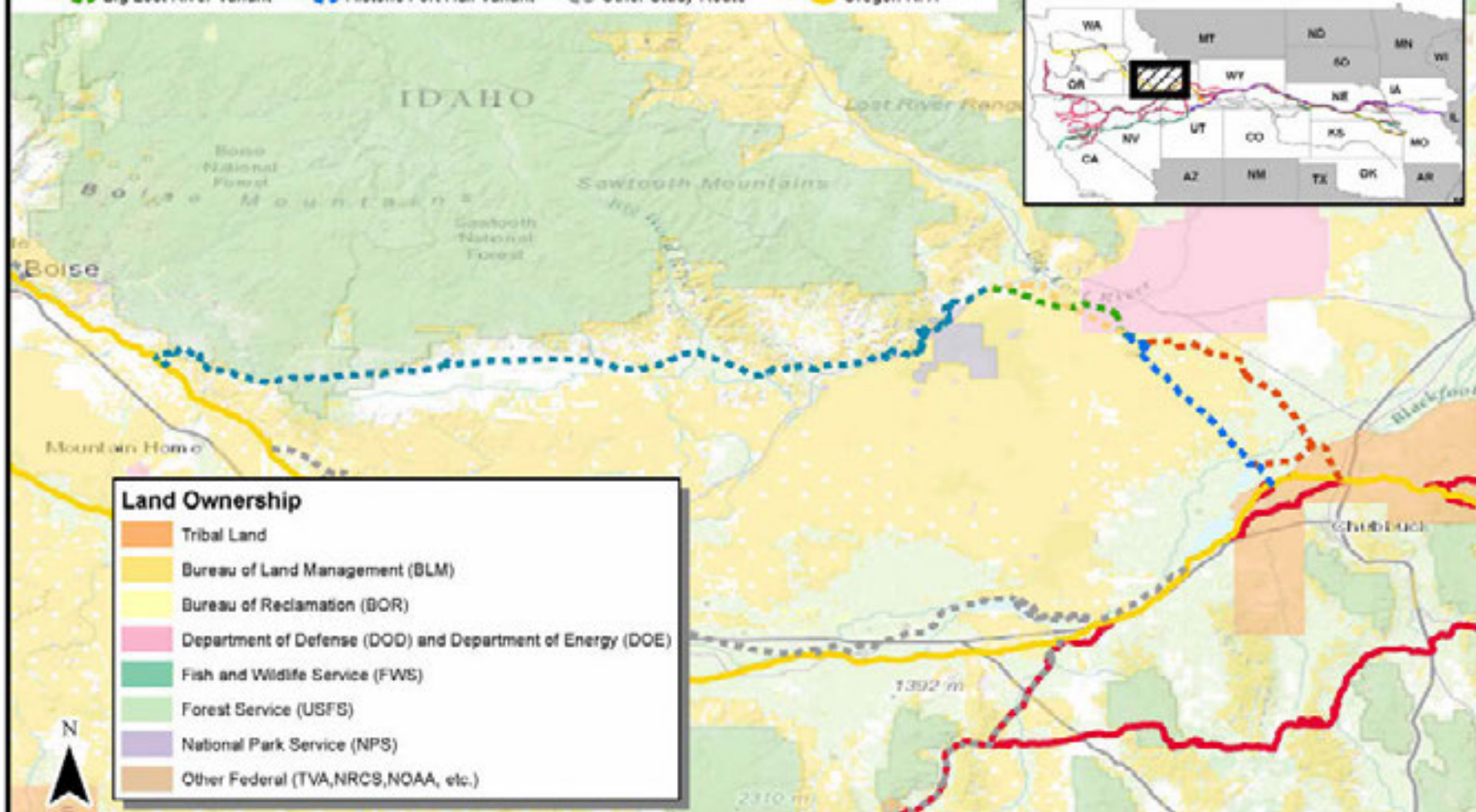
Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NMEL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, MapboxIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community





## 43. Goodale's Cutoff: (Jeffrey-Goodale Cutoff)

- Jeffrey-Goodale Cutoff 
 ●●● Ferry Butte Variant 
 ●●● Teakettle Butte Variant 
 — California NHT 
 — Oregon NHT 
 ●●● Big Lost River Variant 
 ●●● Historic Fort Hall Variant 
 ●●● Other Study Route

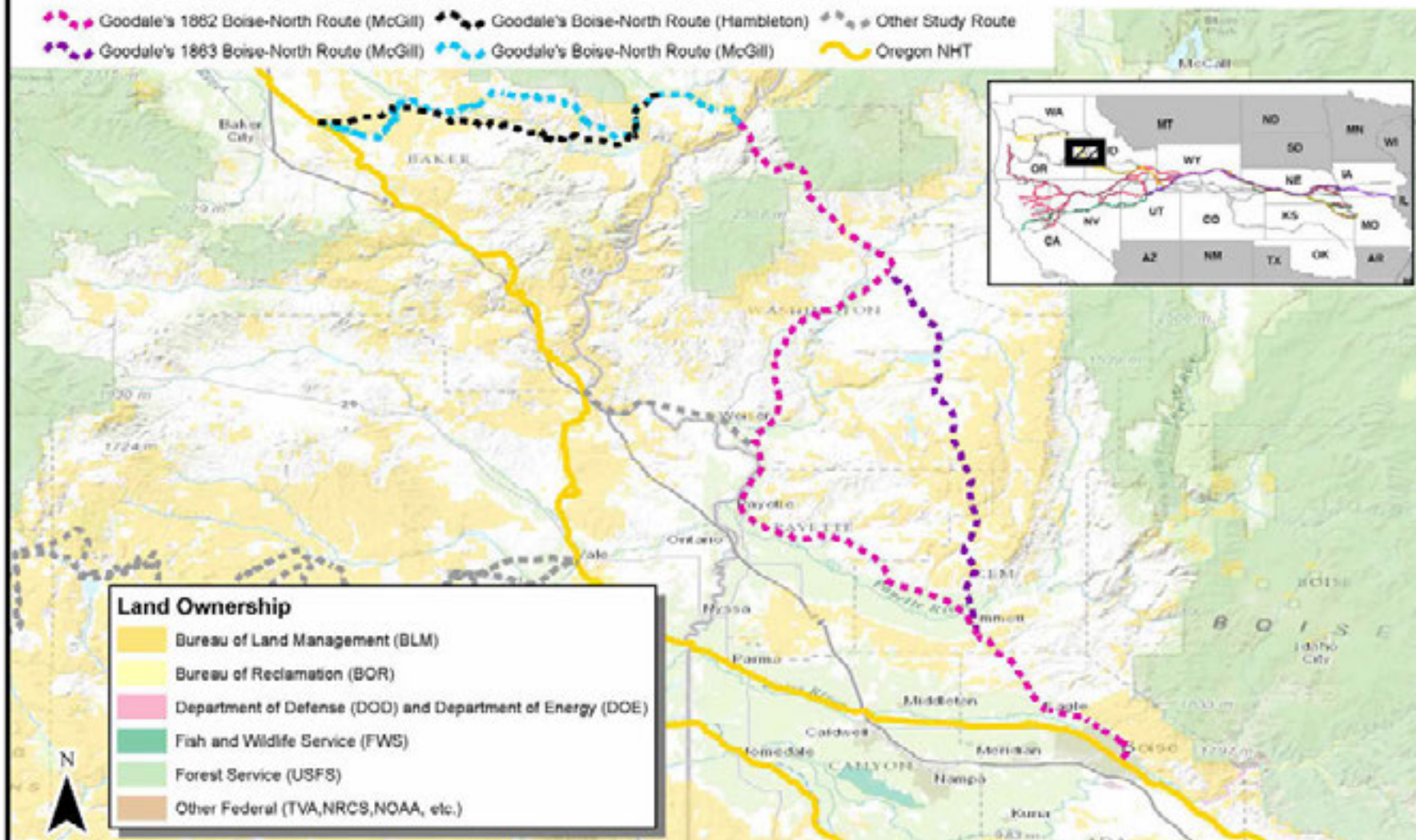






## 44. Goodale's Boise-North 1862 and 1863 Routes

- Goodale's 1862 Boise-North Route (McGill)
- Goodale's 1862 Boise-North Route (Hambleton)
- Other Study Route
- Goodale's 1863 Boise-North Route (McGill)
- Goodale's Boise-North Route (McGill)
- Oregon NHT



### Land Ownership

- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)
- Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of Energy (DOE)
- Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
- Forest Service (USFS)
- Other Federal (TVA, NRCS, NOAA, etc.)

0 3 6 12 18 24 30 36 42 48 54 60 Miles

Produced by National Trails Intermountain Region

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15 May 2015

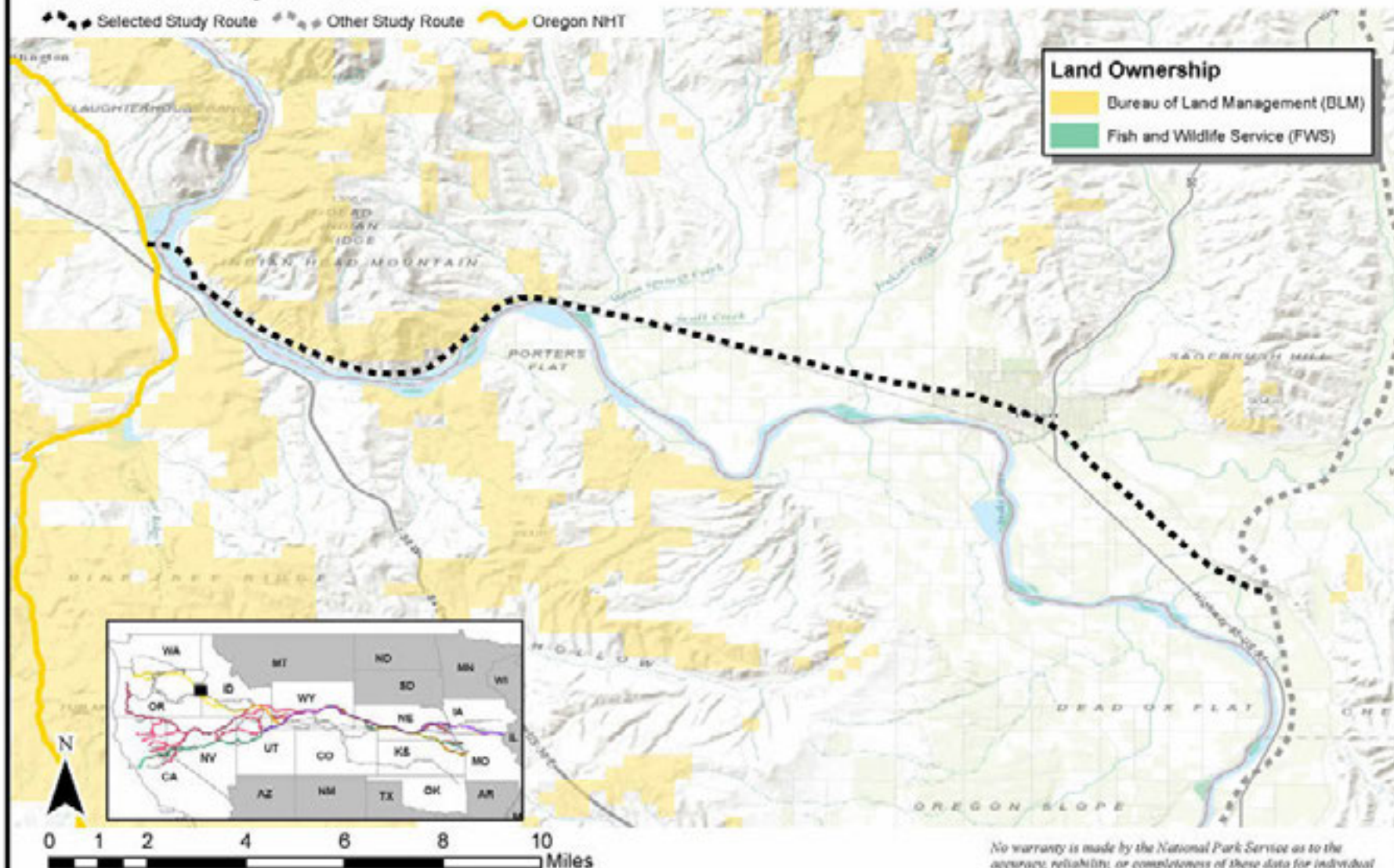
FILE: 48a06\_8\_Sx11June\_2015\_COP

Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NMEL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, Mapbox India, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community





## 45. Olds Ferry Road



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FILE: 45a04k\_8\_Sx11June\_2015\_DCP

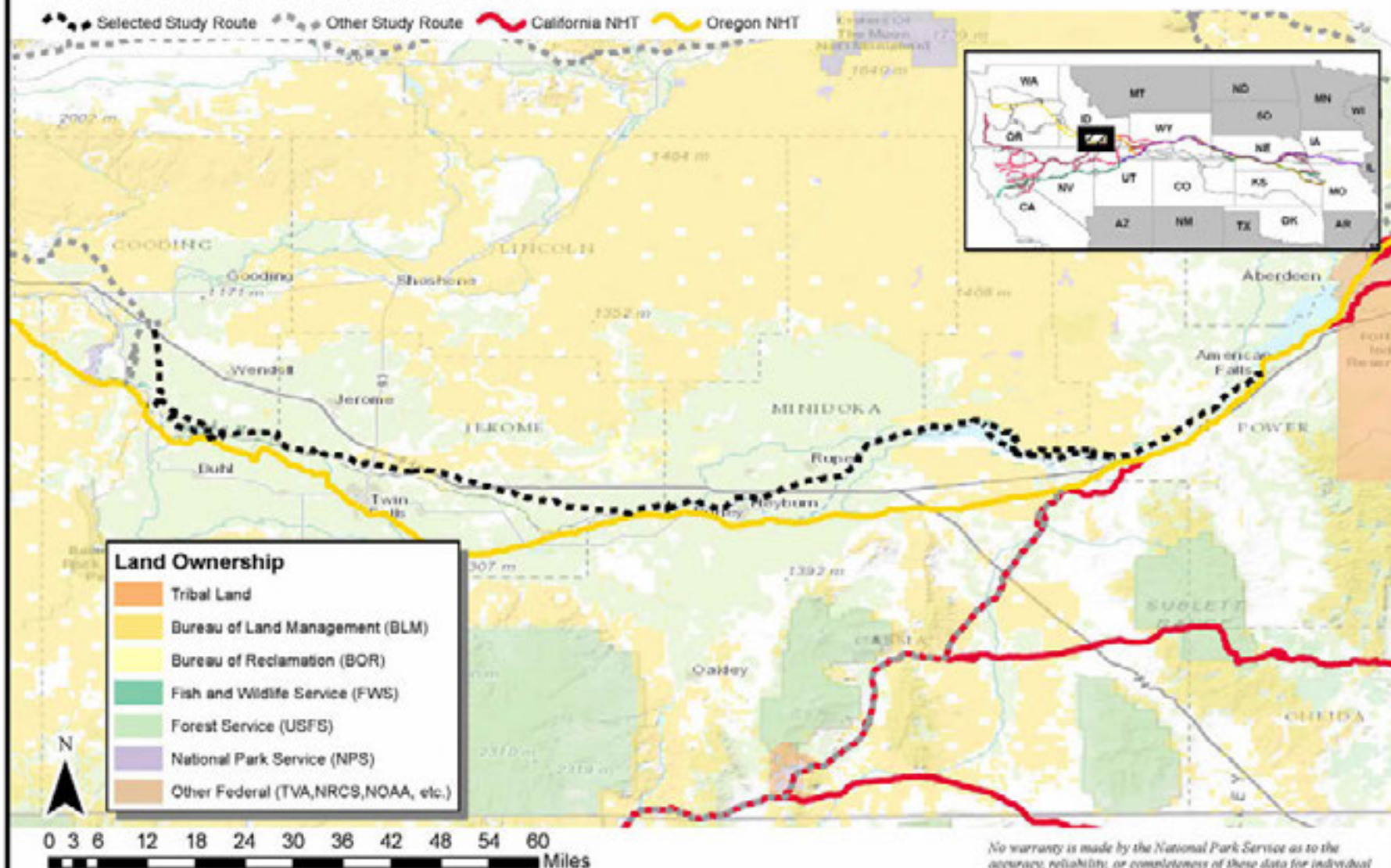
No warranty is made by the National Park Service as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.

15 May 2015

Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NMEL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, Geobase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, Mapbox India, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



## 46. North Side Alternate Route



15 May 2015

FILE: 46nsh\_8\_Sx11June\_2015\_COP

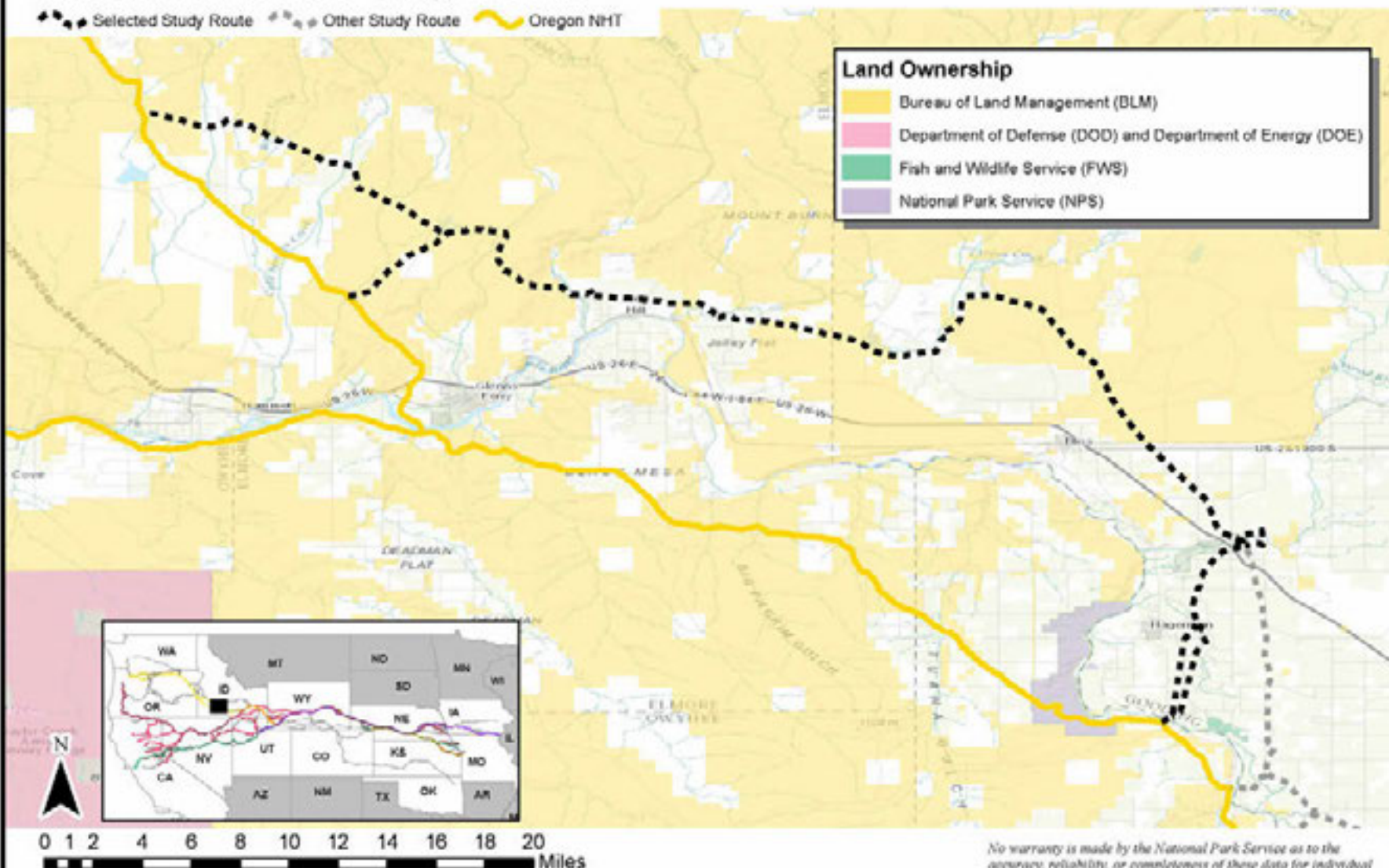
Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NMEL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, Geobase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, MapboxIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community





## 47. North Alternate Oregon Trail

Selected Study Route Other Study Route Oregon NHT



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15 May 2015

Produced by National Trails Intermountain Region

FILE: 4804h\_8\_Sx110and\_2015\_DOP

Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NMEL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, MapboxIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

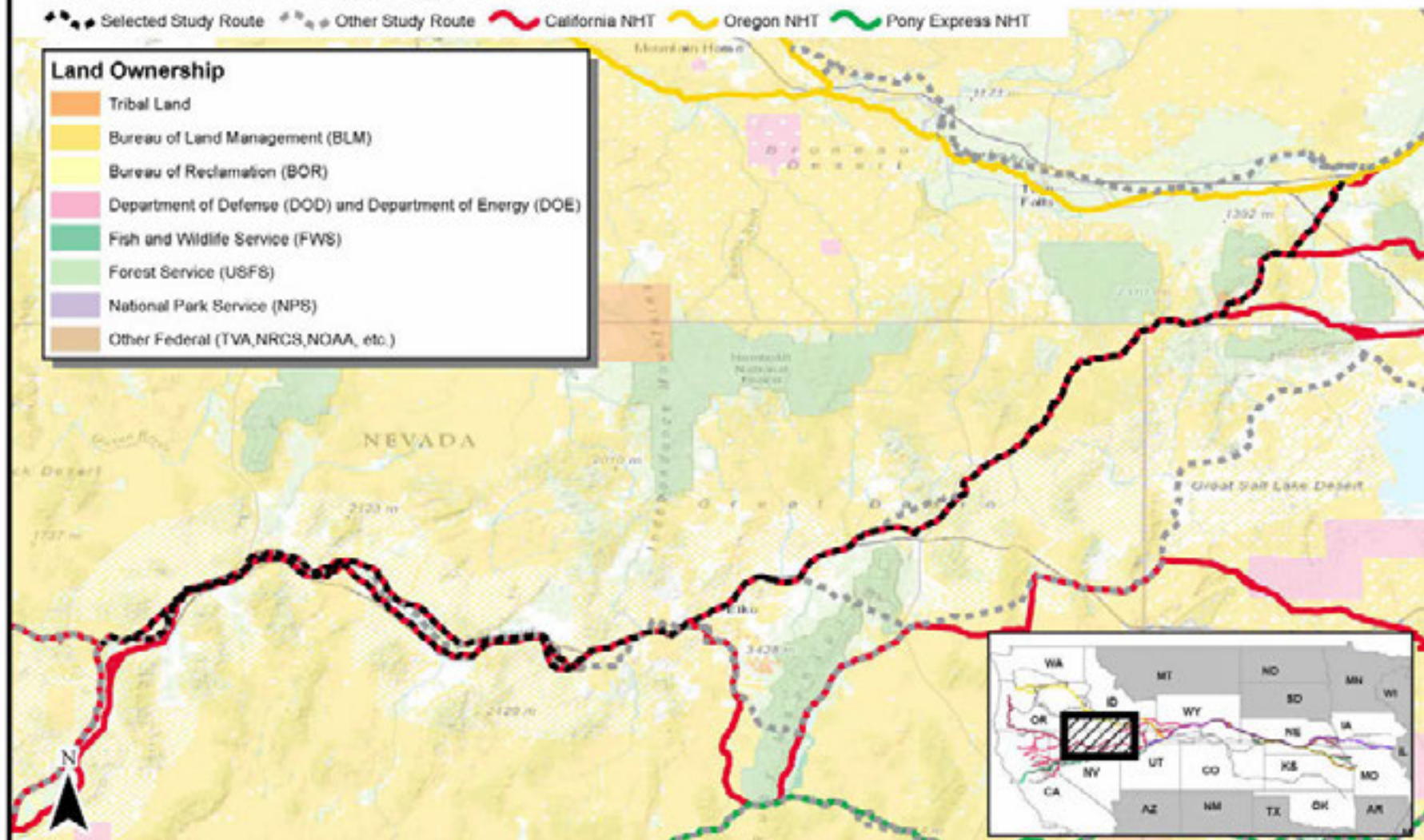


## 48. Raft River to Applegate Trail

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT Oregon NHT Pony Express NHT

### Land Ownership

- Tribal Land
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)
- Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of Energy (DOE)
- Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
- Forest Service (USFS)
- National Park Service (NPS)
- Other Federal (TVA, NRCS, NOAA, etc.)



0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100  
Miles

Produced by National Trails Intermountain Region

No warranty is made by the National Park Service as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.

14 May 2015

FILE: 48rafr\_8\_8x11final\_2015\_COP

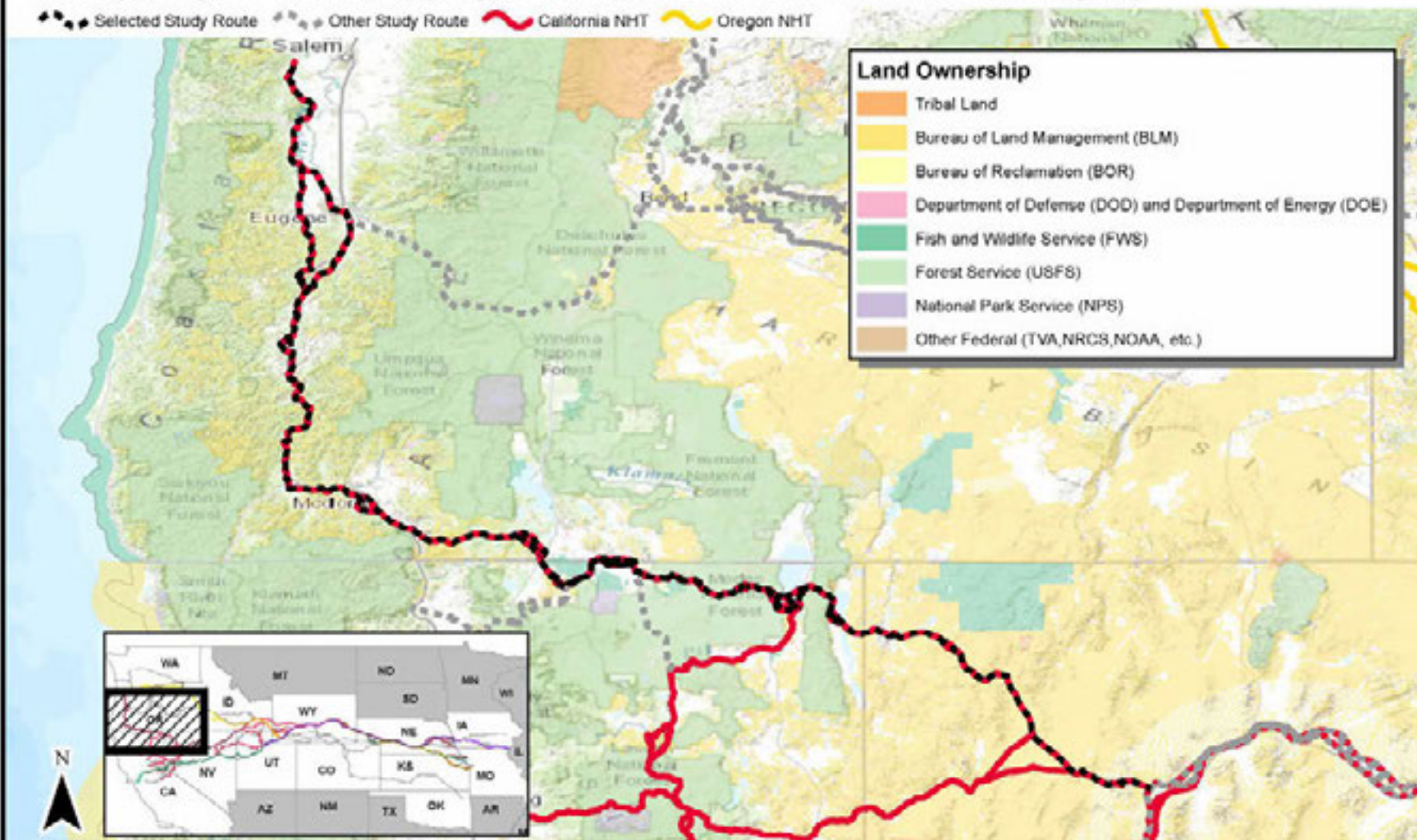
Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NMEL, Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, MapboxIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community





## 49. Applegate Trail (Applegate Trail, or Southern Route to Oregon)

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT Oregon NHT



### Land Ownership

- Tribal Land
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)
- Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of Energy (DOE)
- Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
- Forest Service (USFS)
- National Park Service (NPS)
- Other Federal (TVA, NRCB, NOAA, etc.)

0 10 20 40 60 80 100 120 140 160 180 200 Miles

Produced by National Trails Intermountain Region

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14 May 2015

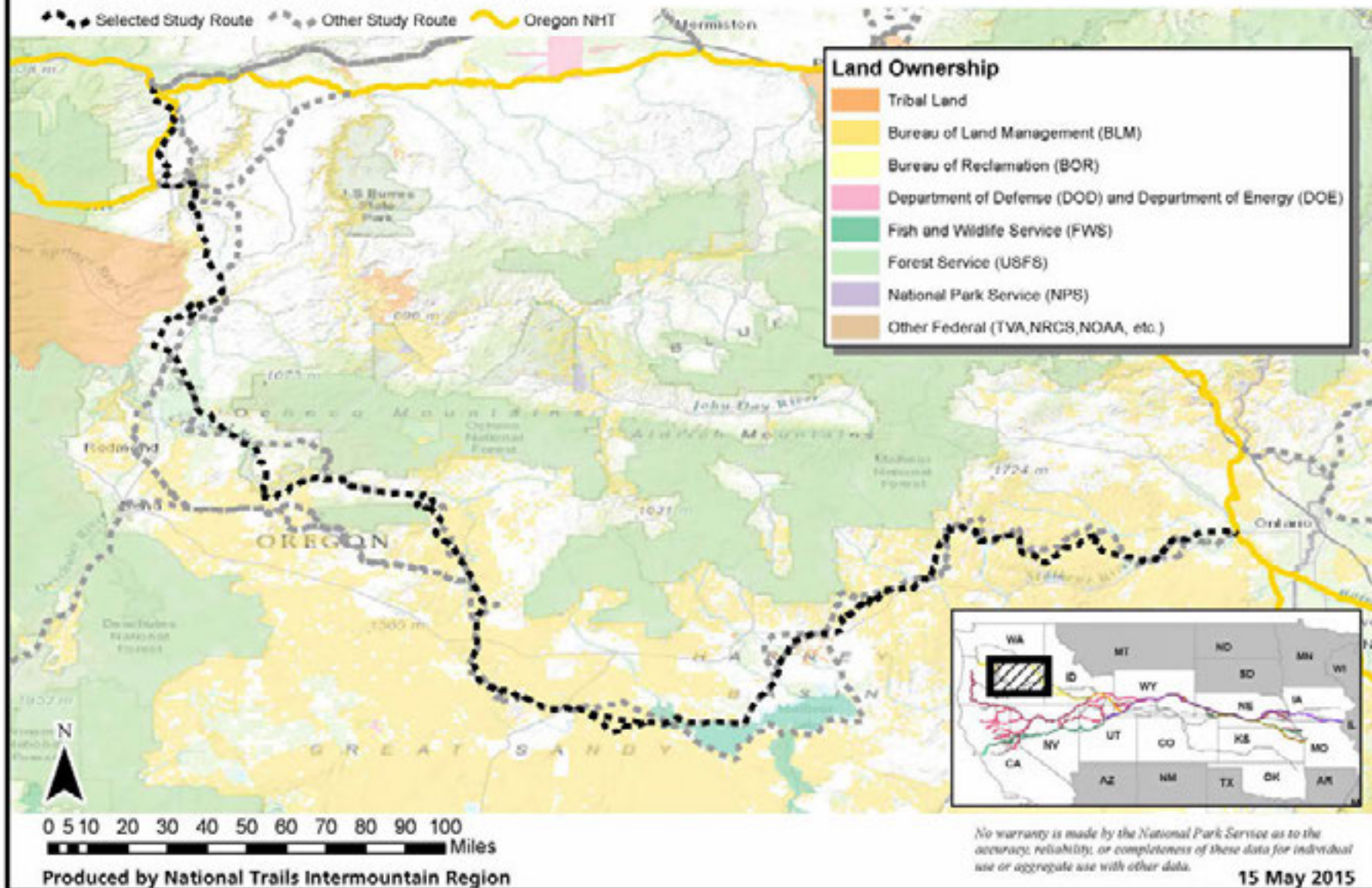
FILE: 49a04\_8\_Sx110and\_2015\_COP

Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NMEL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, MapboxIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community





## 50A. Meek Cutoff - Hambleton



FILE: 49aak\_8\_Sk115and\_2015\_COP

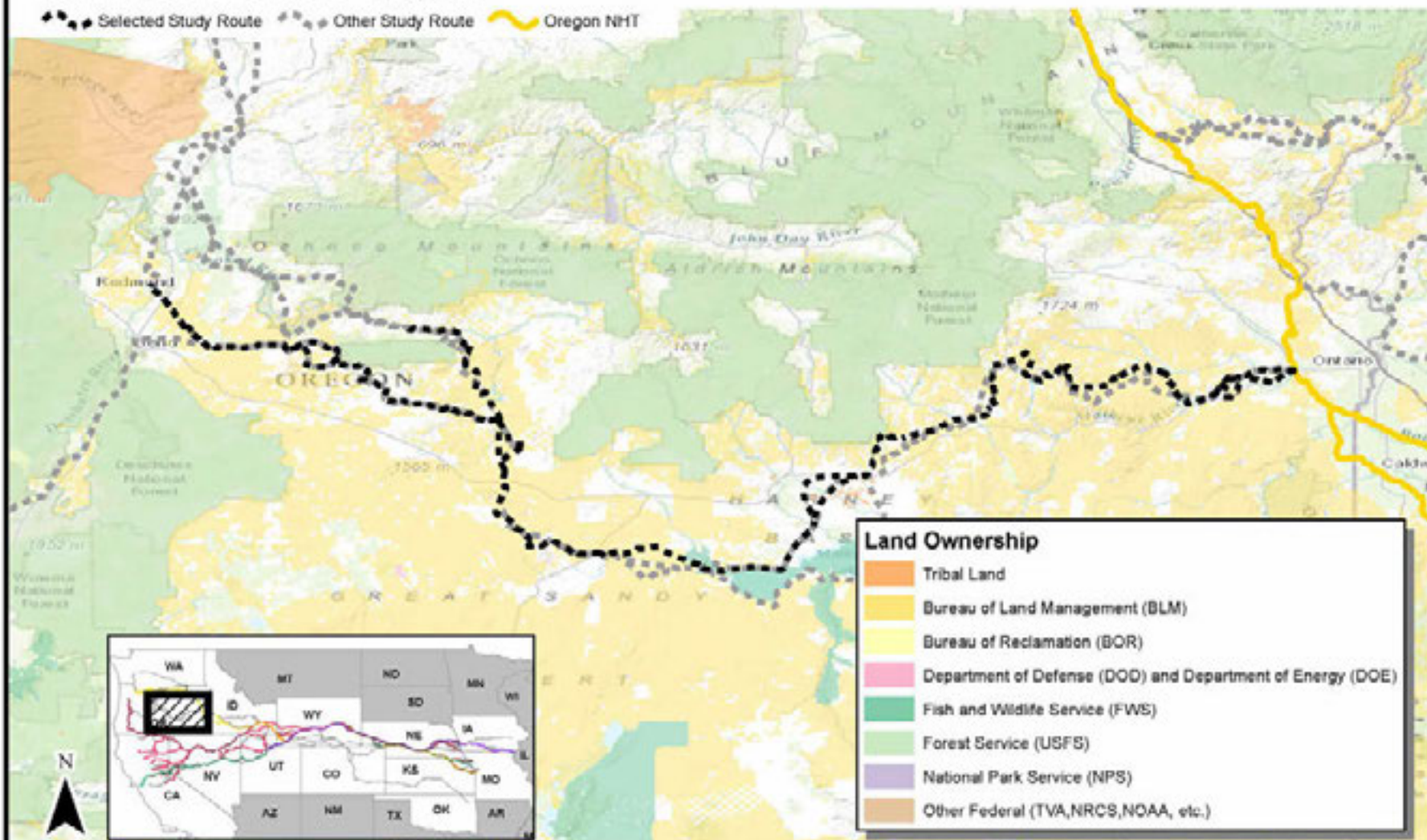
Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NMEL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, Mapbox India, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community





## 50B. Meek Cutoff - Ragen

Selected Study Route Other Study Route Oregon NHT



0 5 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100  
Miles

Produced by National Trails Intermountain Region

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15 May 2015

FILE: 49a06\_8\_Sx11June\_2015\_COP

Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NMEL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, MapboxIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



## 50C. Meek Cutoff - Hinshaw

Selected Study Route Other Study Route Oregon NHT



### Land Ownership

- Tribal Land
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)
- Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of Energy (DOE)
- Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
- Forest Service (USFS)
- National Park Service (NPS)
- Other Federal (TVA, NRCS, NOAA, etc.)



0 3 6 12 18 24 30 36 42 48 54 60  
Miles

Produced by National Trails Intermountain Region

No warranty is made by the National Park Service as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.

15 May 2015

FILE: 49a06\_8\_Six11June\_2015\_COP

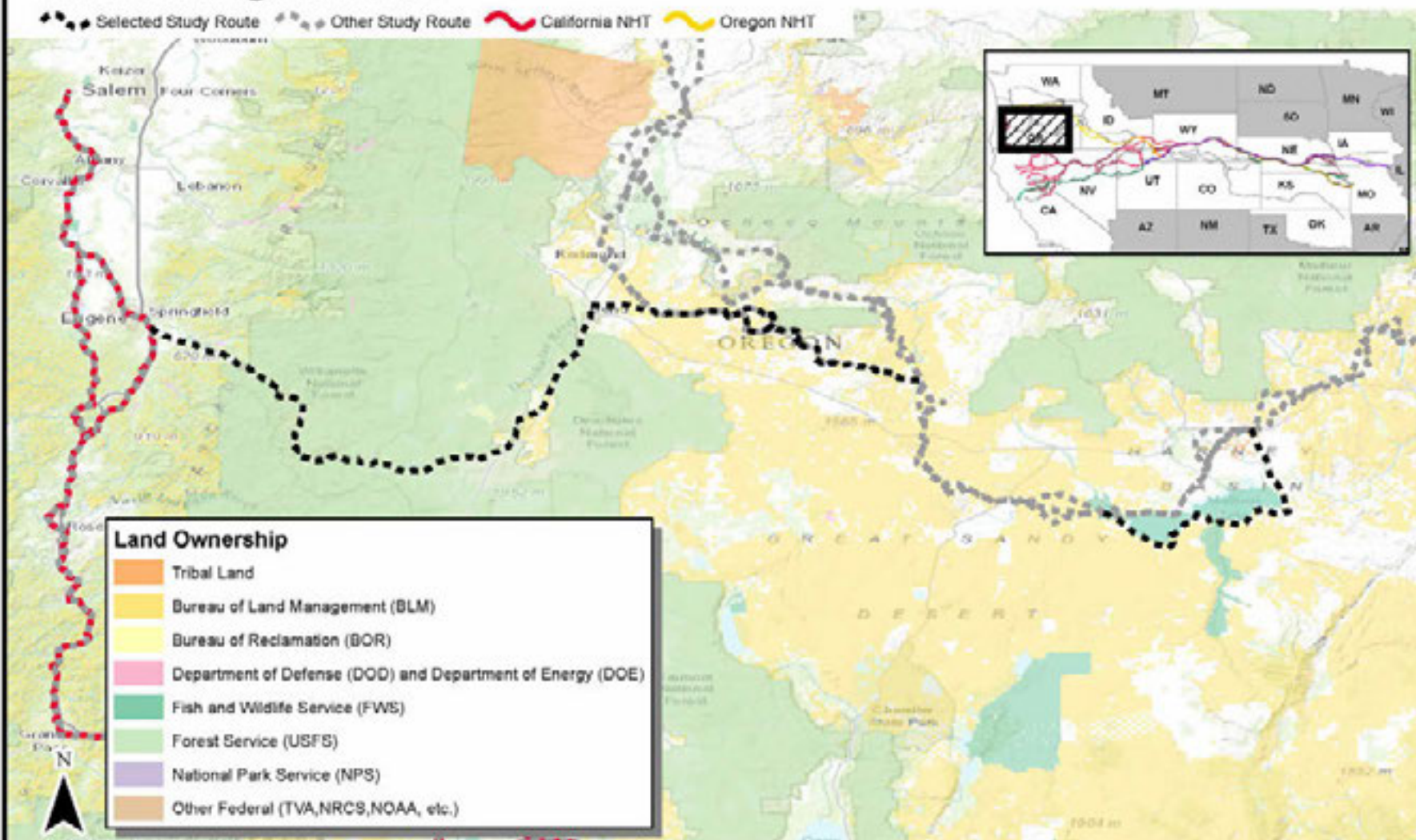
Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NMEL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, Mapbox India, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community





## 51. Free Emigrant Road

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT Oregon NHT



No warranty is made by the National Park Service as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.

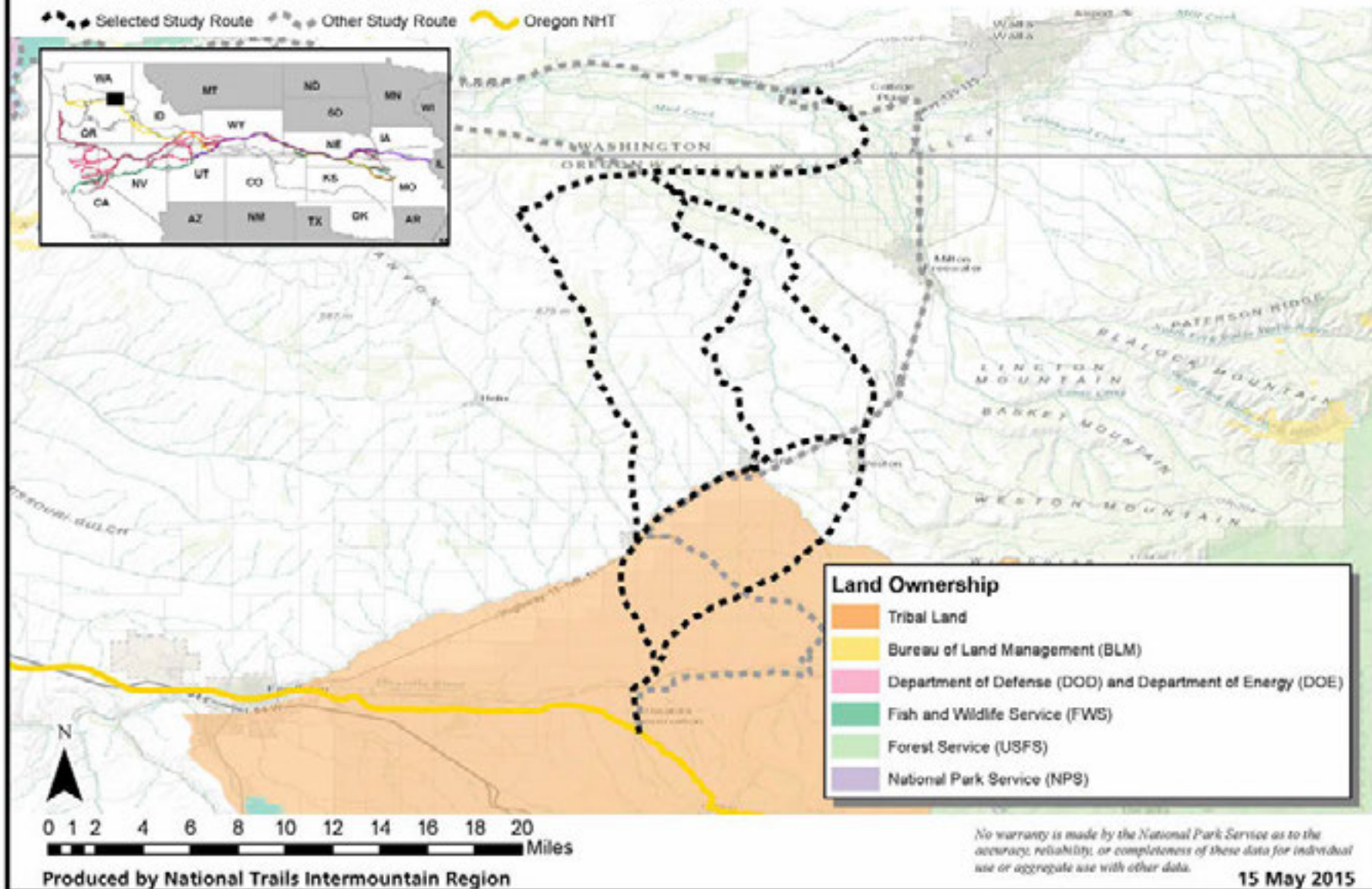
15 May 2015





## 52. Whitman Mission Route - Three variants

Selected Study Route Other Study Route Oregon NHT



FILE: 49a06\_8\_Six11and\_2015\_COP

Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NMEL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, Mapbox India, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

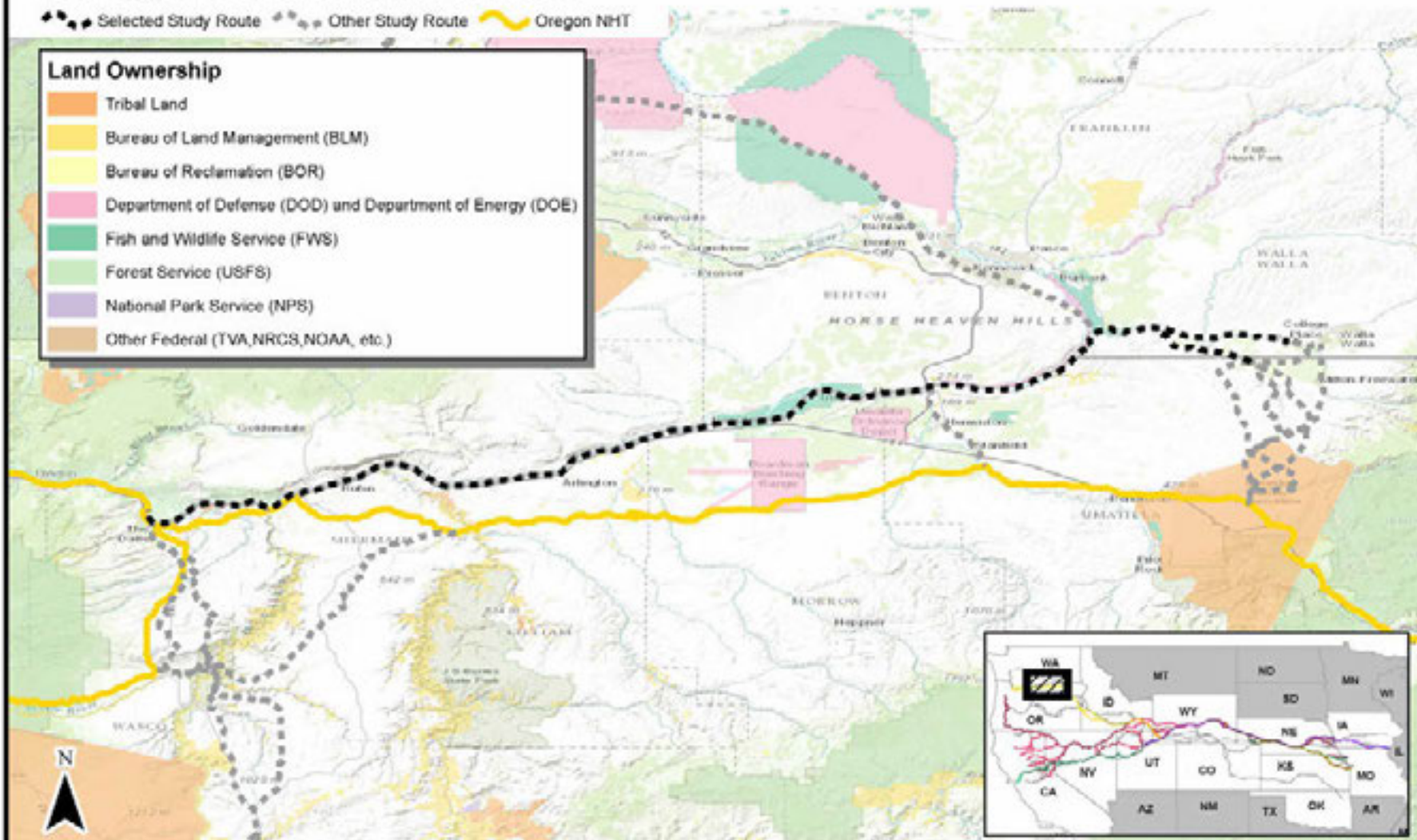


## 53. Upper Columbia River Route

Selected Study Route Other Study Route Oregon NHT

### Land Ownership

- Tribal Land
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)
- Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of Energy (DOE)
- Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
- Forest Service (USFS)
- National Park Service (NPS)
- Other Federal (TVA, NRCS, NOAA, etc.)



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01 June 2015

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FILE: 48aah\_8\_Sx11June\_2015\_COP

Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, MapboxIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



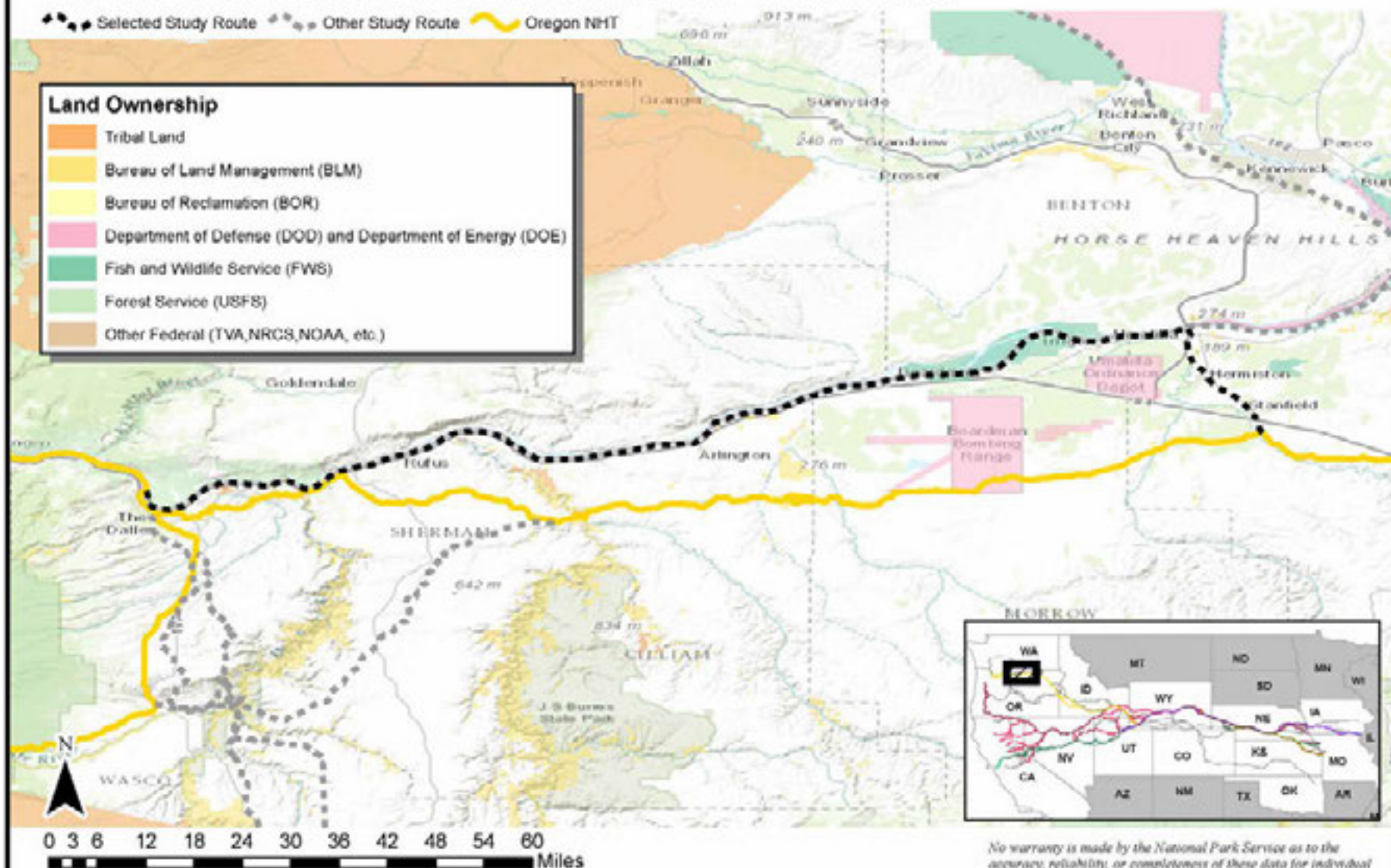


## 54. Umatilla River Route & Columbia River to the Dalles

Selected Study Route Other Study Route Oregon NHT

### Land Ownership

- Tribal Land
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)
- Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of Energy (DOE)
- Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
- Forest Service (USFS)
- Other Federal (TVA, NRCS, NOAA, etc.)



No warranty is made by the National Park Service as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.

01 June 2015

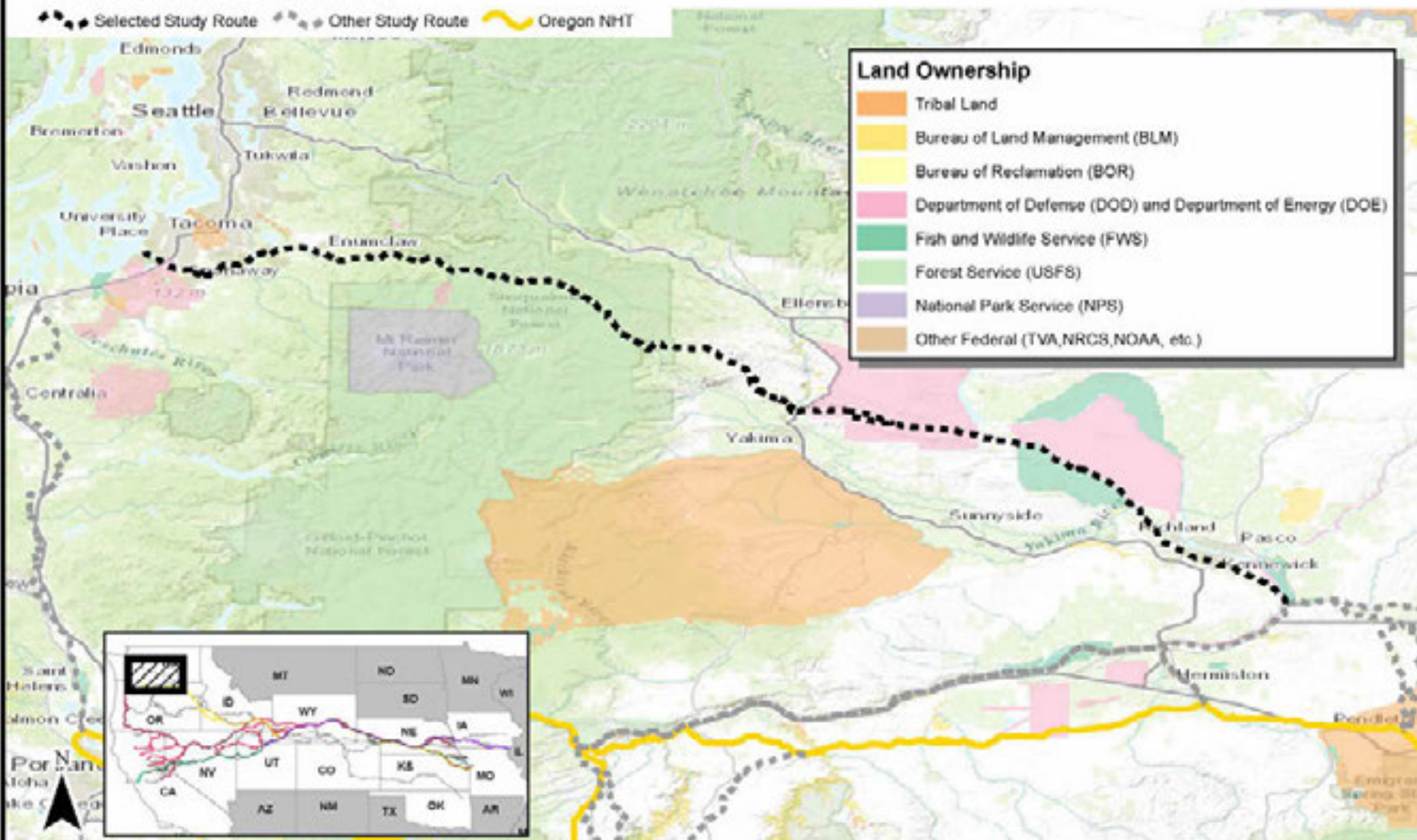
FILE: 49a06\_8\_Sx11June\_2015\_COP

Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, Geobase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, Mapbox India, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



## 55. Naches Pass Trail

Selected Study Route Other Study Route Oregon NHT



### Land Ownership

- Tribal Land
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)
- Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of Energy (DOE)
- Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
- Forest Service (USFS)
- National Park Service (NPS)
- Other Federal (TVA, NRCS, NOAA, etc.)

0 5 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 Miles

Produced by National Trails Intermountain Region

No warranty is made by the National Park Service as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.

15 May 2015

FILE: 49a06\_8\_Sx11June\_2015\_COP

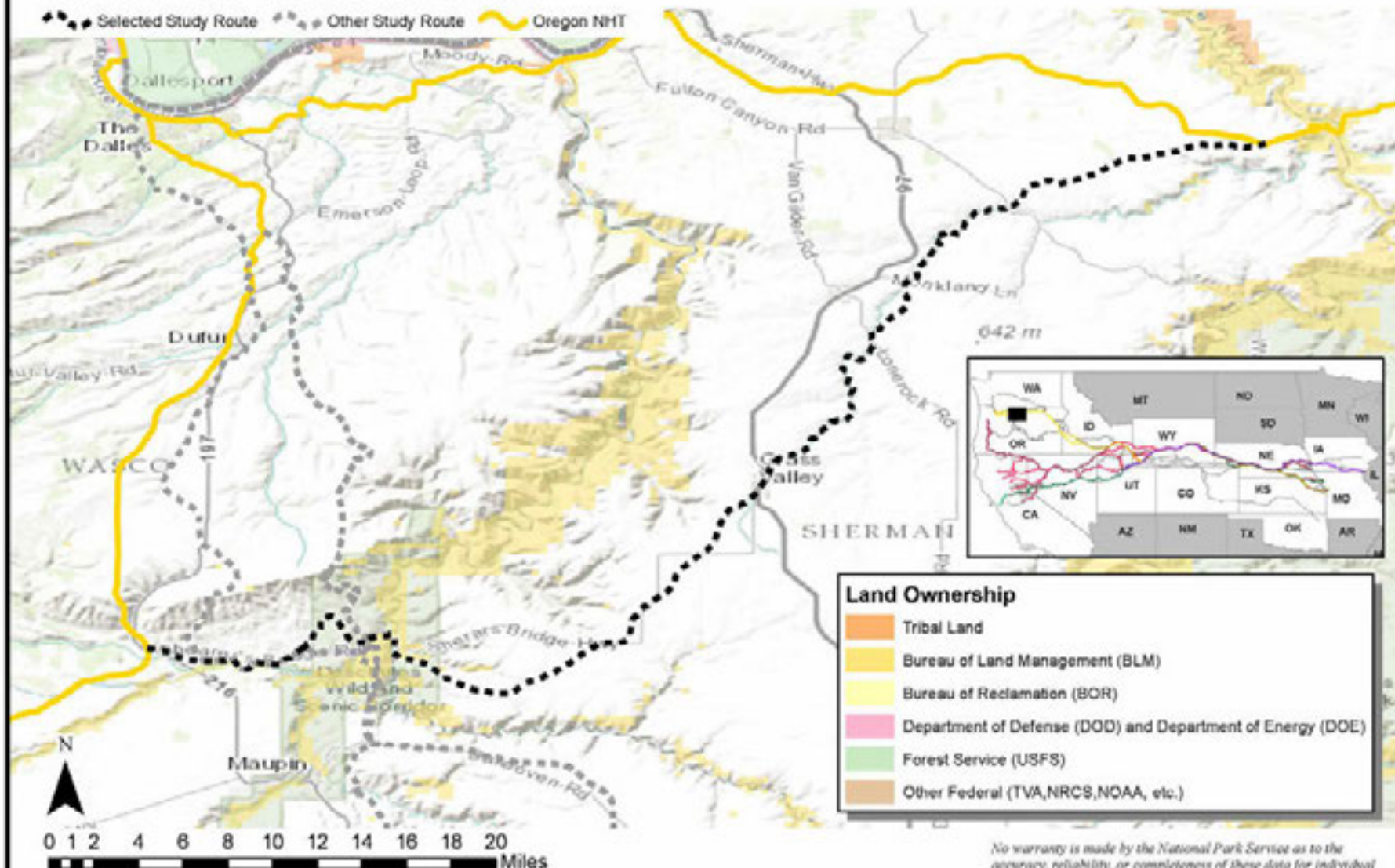
Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NMEL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, MapboxIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community





## 56. Cutoff to the Barlow Road

Selected Study Route Other Study Route Oregon NHT



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15 May 2015

FILE: 49a06\_8\_Sx110and\_2015\_COP

Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NMEL, Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, Mapbox India, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



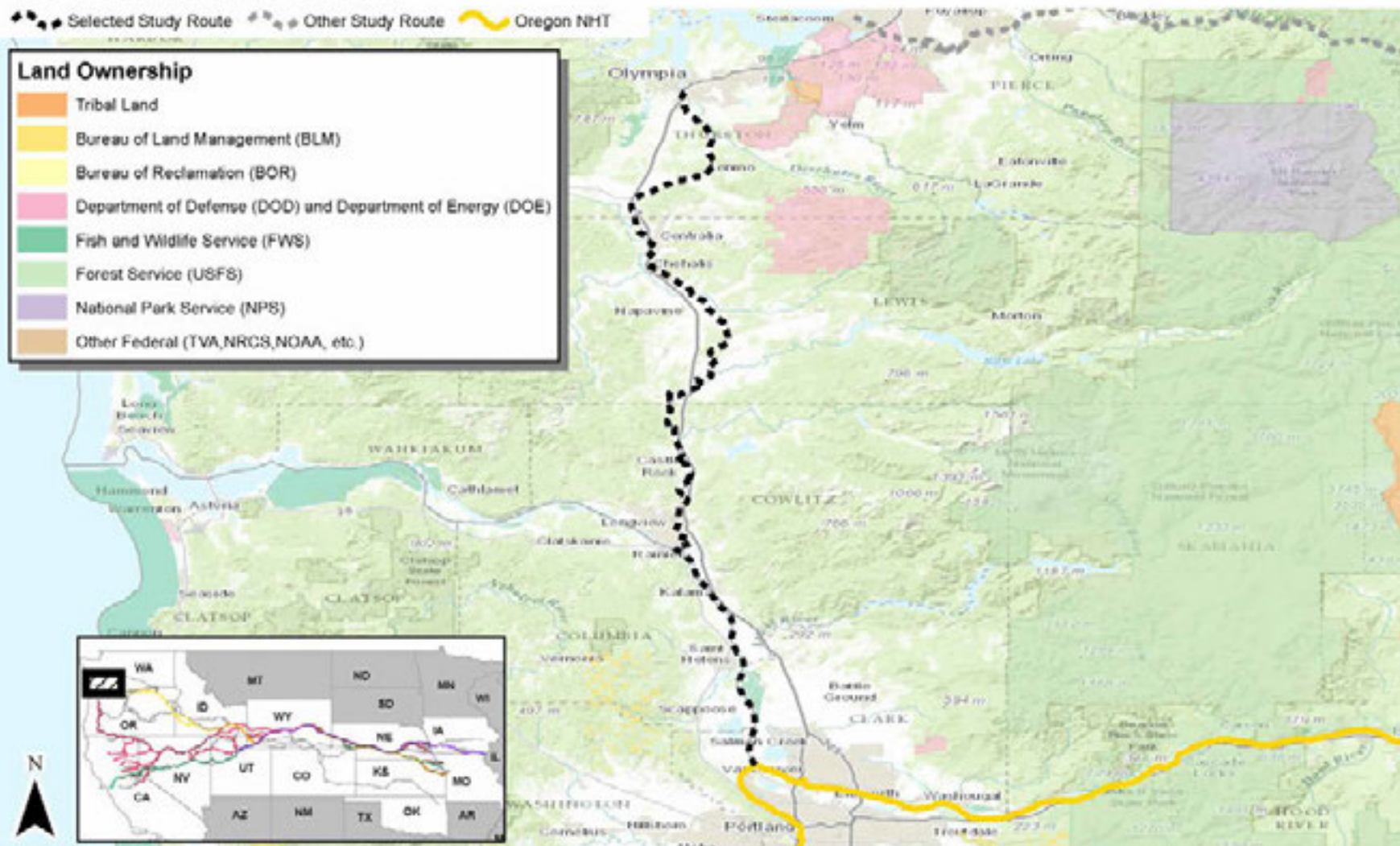


## 57. Cowlitz River Route

Selected Study Route Other Study Route Oregon NHT

### Land Ownership

- Tribal Land
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)
- Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of Energy (DOE)
- Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
- Forest Service (USFS)
- National Park Service (NPS)
- Other Federal (TVA, NRCS, NOAA, etc.)



0 3 6 12 18 24 30 36 42 48 54 60 Miles

Produced by National Trails Intermountain Region

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15 May 2015

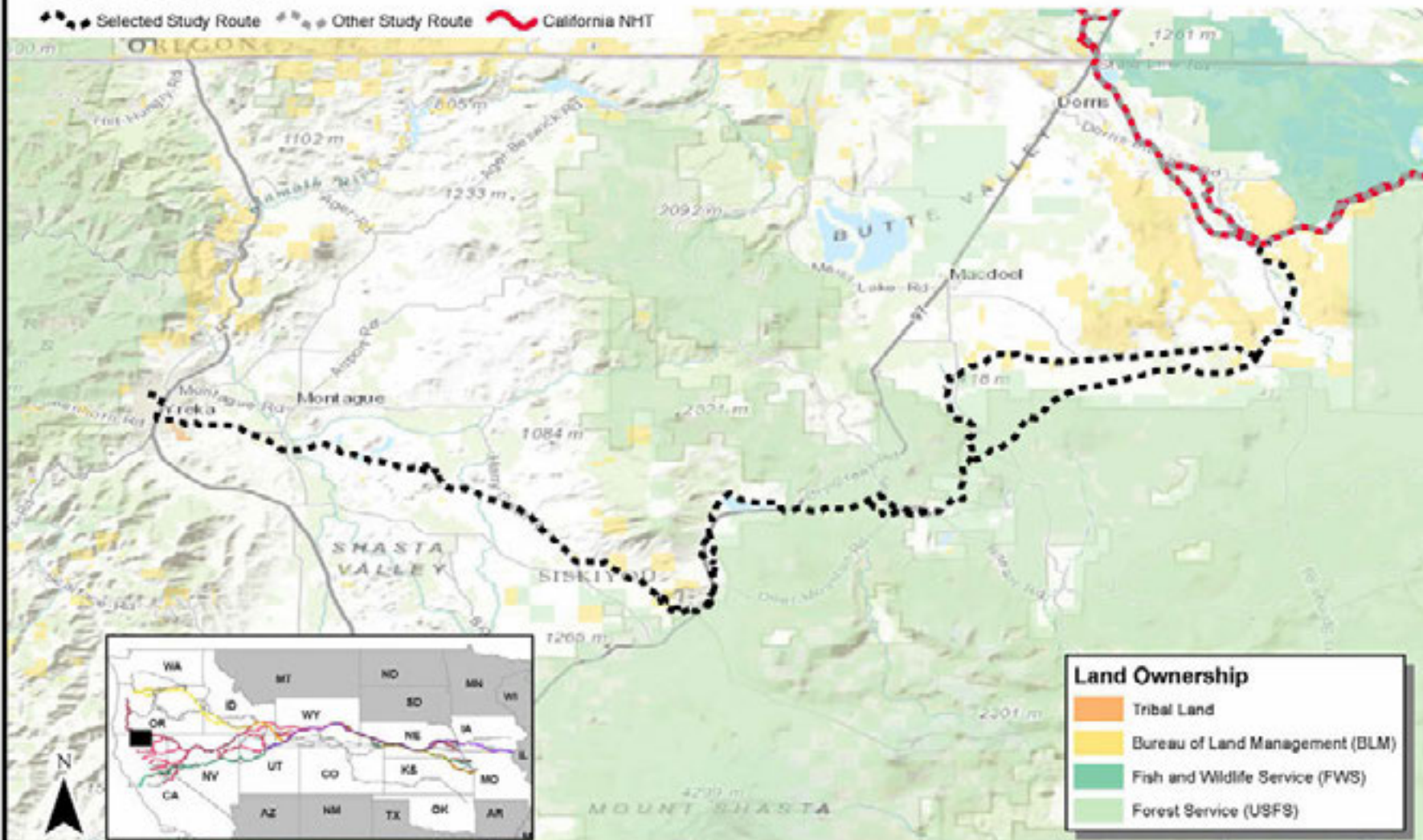
FILE: 48046\_8\_Sx11June\_2015\_COP

Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NMEL, Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, Geobase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, MapboxIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



## 58. Yreka Trail

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT



0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20  
Miles

Produced by National Trails Intermountain Region

No warranty is made by the National Park Service as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.

15 May 2015

FILE: 48046\_8\_Sx110and\_2015\_COP

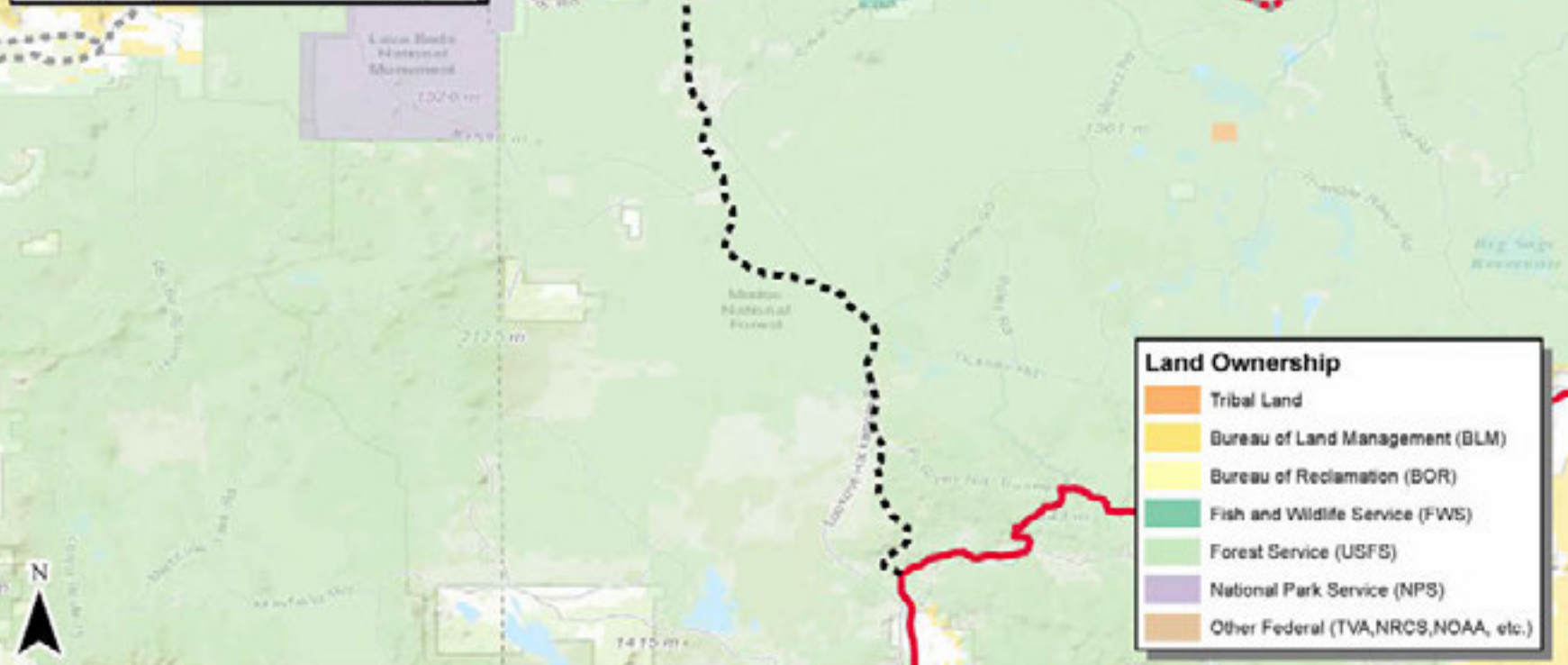
Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NREL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, MapboxIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community





## 59. Burnett Cutoff

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT



0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20  
Miles

Produced by National Trails Intermountain Region

No warranty is made by the National Park Service as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.

19 August 2015

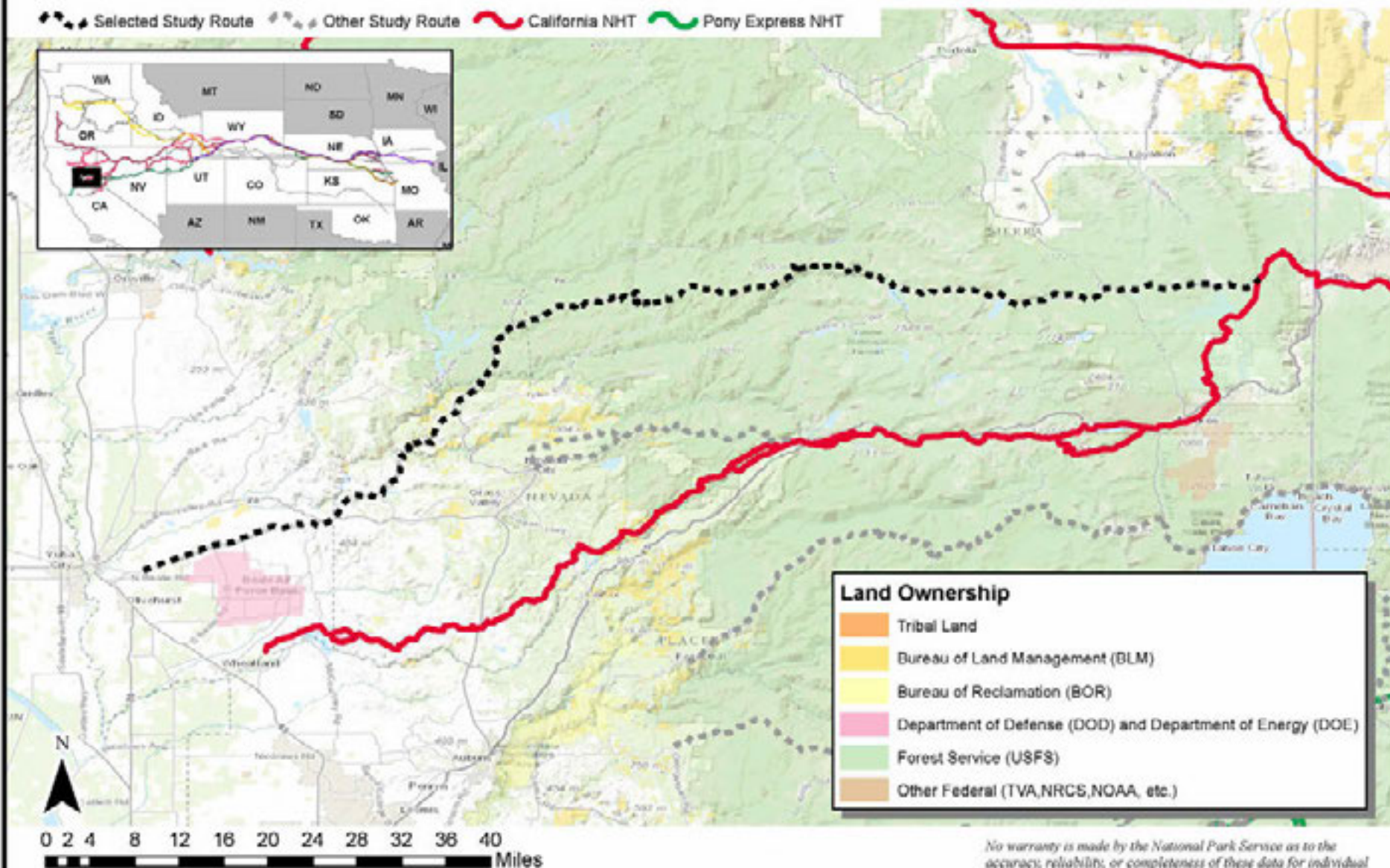
FILE: 48a06\_8\_Sx11June\_2015\_DOP

Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NREL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, Mapbox India, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



## 60. Henness Pass Route

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT Pony Express NHT



Produced by National Trails Intermountain Region

FILE: 4trails\_8.5x11land\_2015\_DOP

Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, Geobase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Data Sources: NPS, ESRI, US Census Bureau, NREL

No warranty is made by the National Park Service as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.

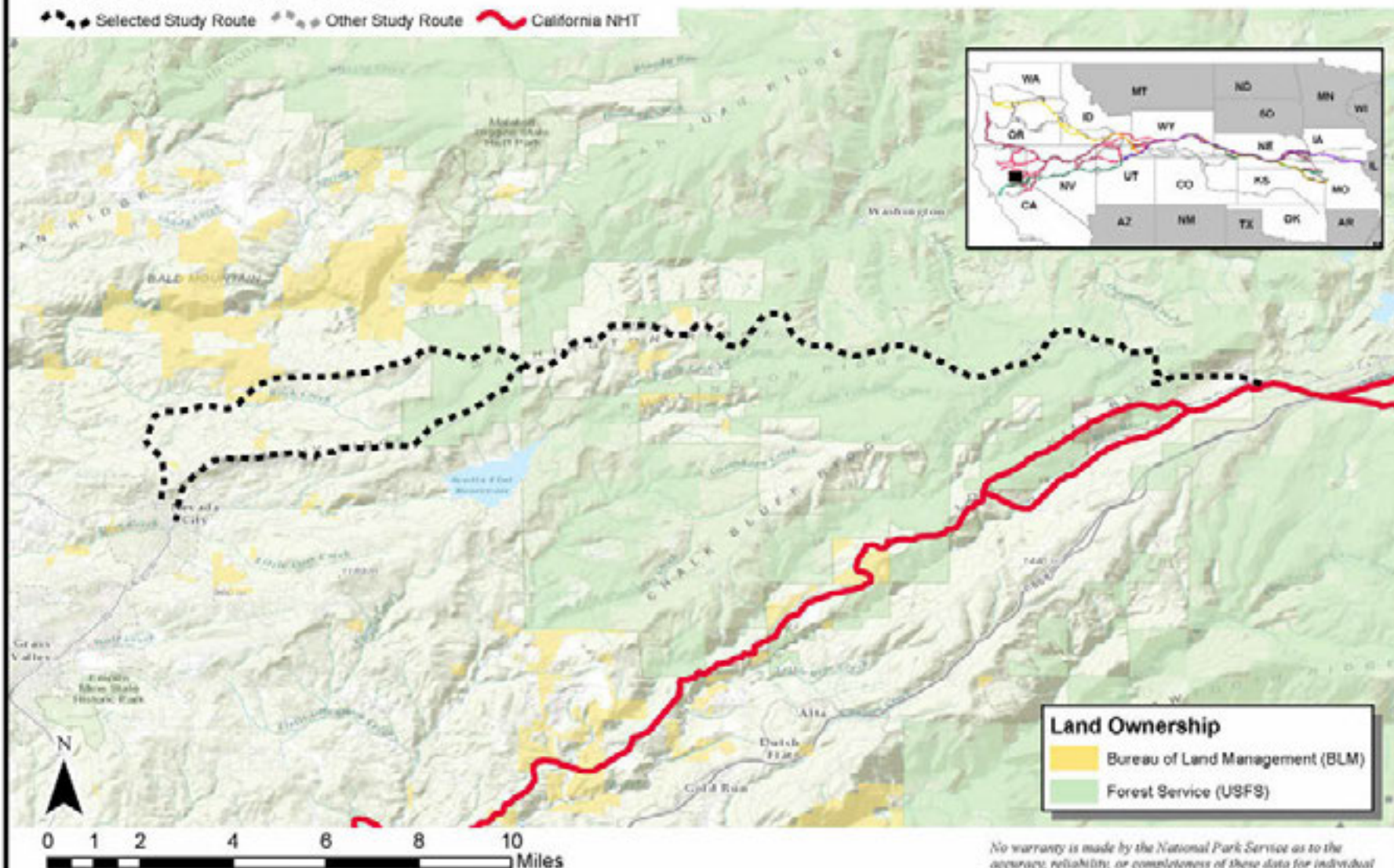
15 May 2015





## 61. Nevada City Road

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT



### Land Ownership

- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Forest Service (USFS)

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15 May 2015

Produced by National Trails Intermountain Region

FILE: 49a06\_8\_Sx11June\_2015\_COP

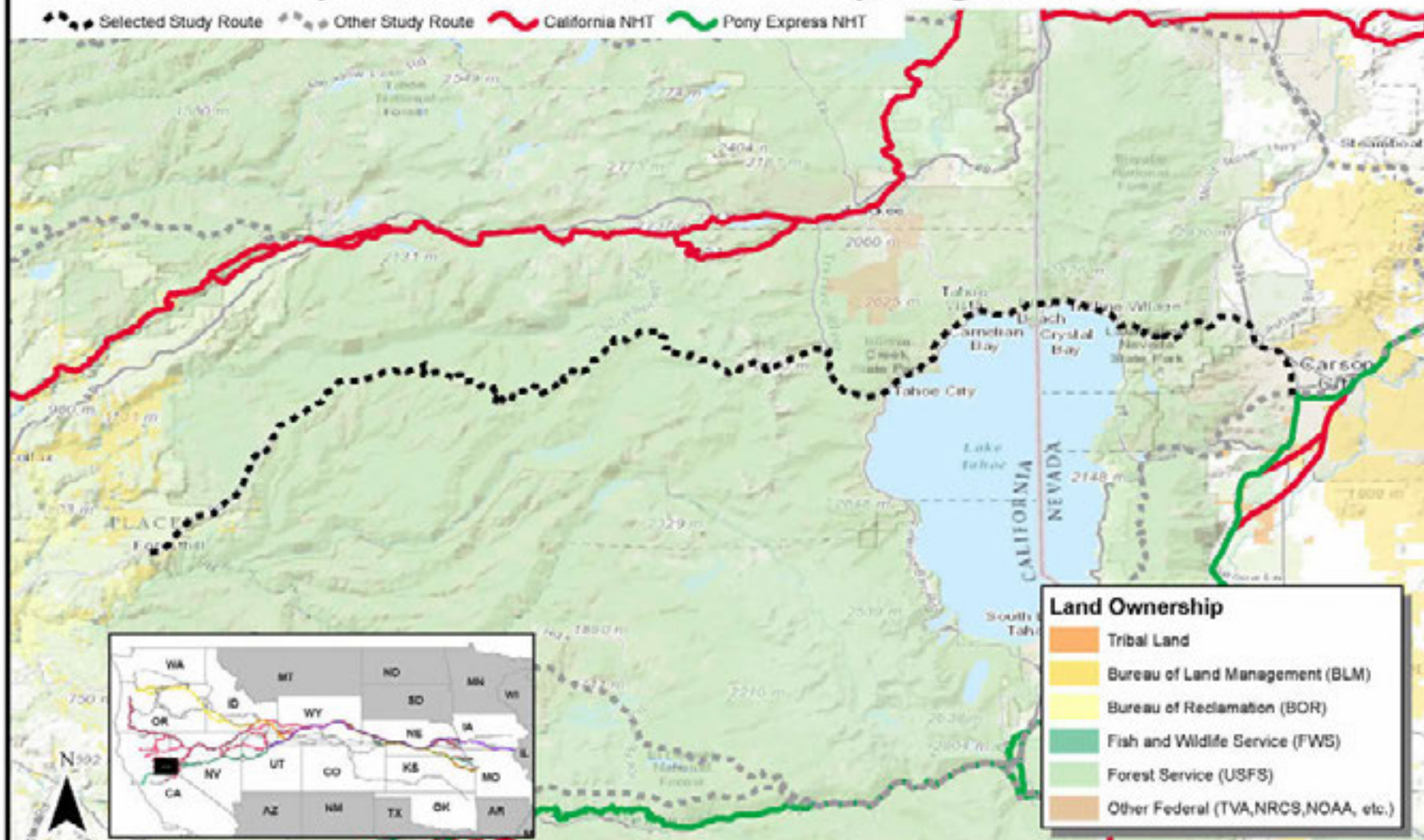
Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NREL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, Mapbox India, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community





## 62. Placer County Road to Auburn (Placer County Emigrant Road)

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT Pony Express NHT



Land Ownership	
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:orange; border:1px solid black;"></span>	Tribal Land
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:yellow; border:1px solid black;"></span>	Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightyellow; border:1px solid black;"></span>	Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:green; border:1px solid black;"></span>	Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:lightgreen; border:1px solid black;"></span>	Forest Service (USFS)
<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:15px; background-color:brown; border:1px solid black;"></span>	Other Federal (TVA, NRCS, NOAA, etc.)

No warranty is made by the National Park Service as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.

15 May 2015

Produced by National Trails Intermountain Region

FILE: 48a06\_8\_Sx11June\_2015\_COP

Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NREL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeBCo, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, Mapbox India, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community





## 63. Johnson Cutoff

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT Pony Express NHT



### Land Ownership

- Tribal Land
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)
- Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
- Forest Service (USFS)
- Other Federal (TVA, NRCS, NOAA, etc.)



0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20  
Miles

Produced by National Trails Intermountain Region

No warranty is made by the National Park Service as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.

15 May 2015

FILE: 49a06\_8\_Sx11June\_2015\_DOP

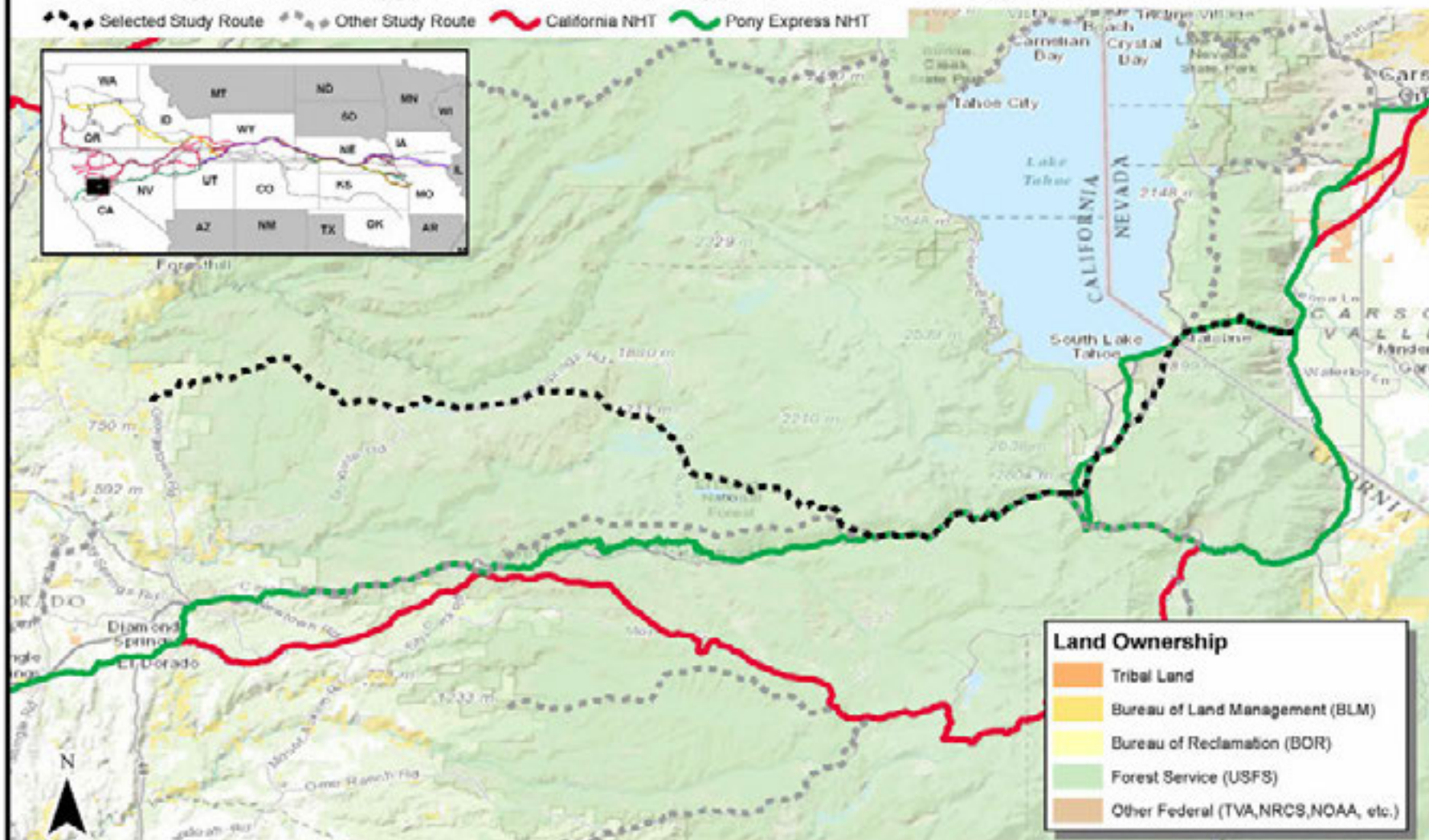
Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NREL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, MapboxIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community





## 64. Georgetown/Daggett Pass Trail (Daggett Pass to Georgetown Trail)

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT Pony Express NHT



0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20  
Miles

Produced by National Trails Intermountain Region

No warranty is made by the National Park Service as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.

15 May 2015

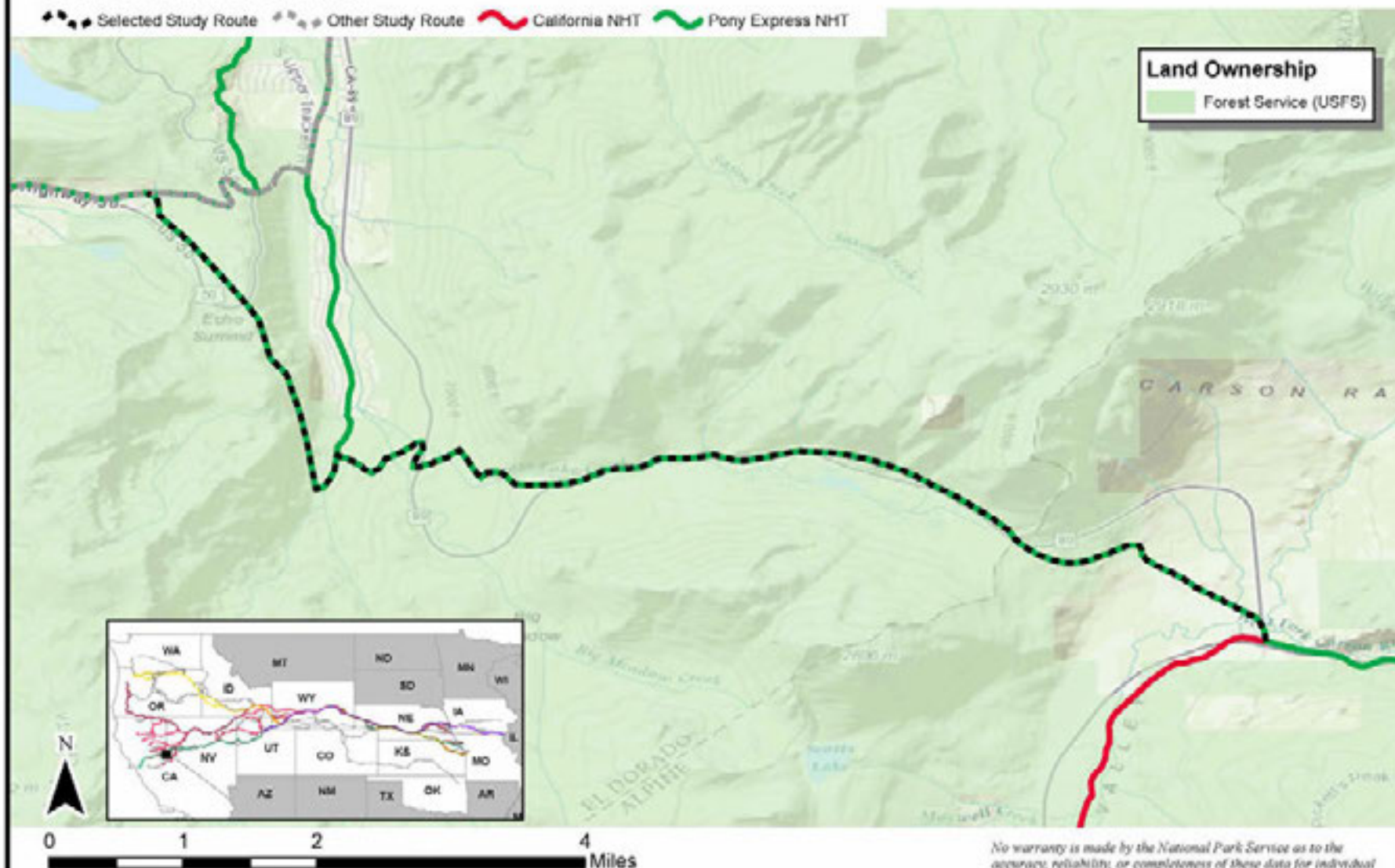
FILE: 48046\_8\_Sx11June\_2015\_COP

Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NMEL, Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, Mapbox India, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



## 65. Luther Pass Trail

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT Pony Express NHT

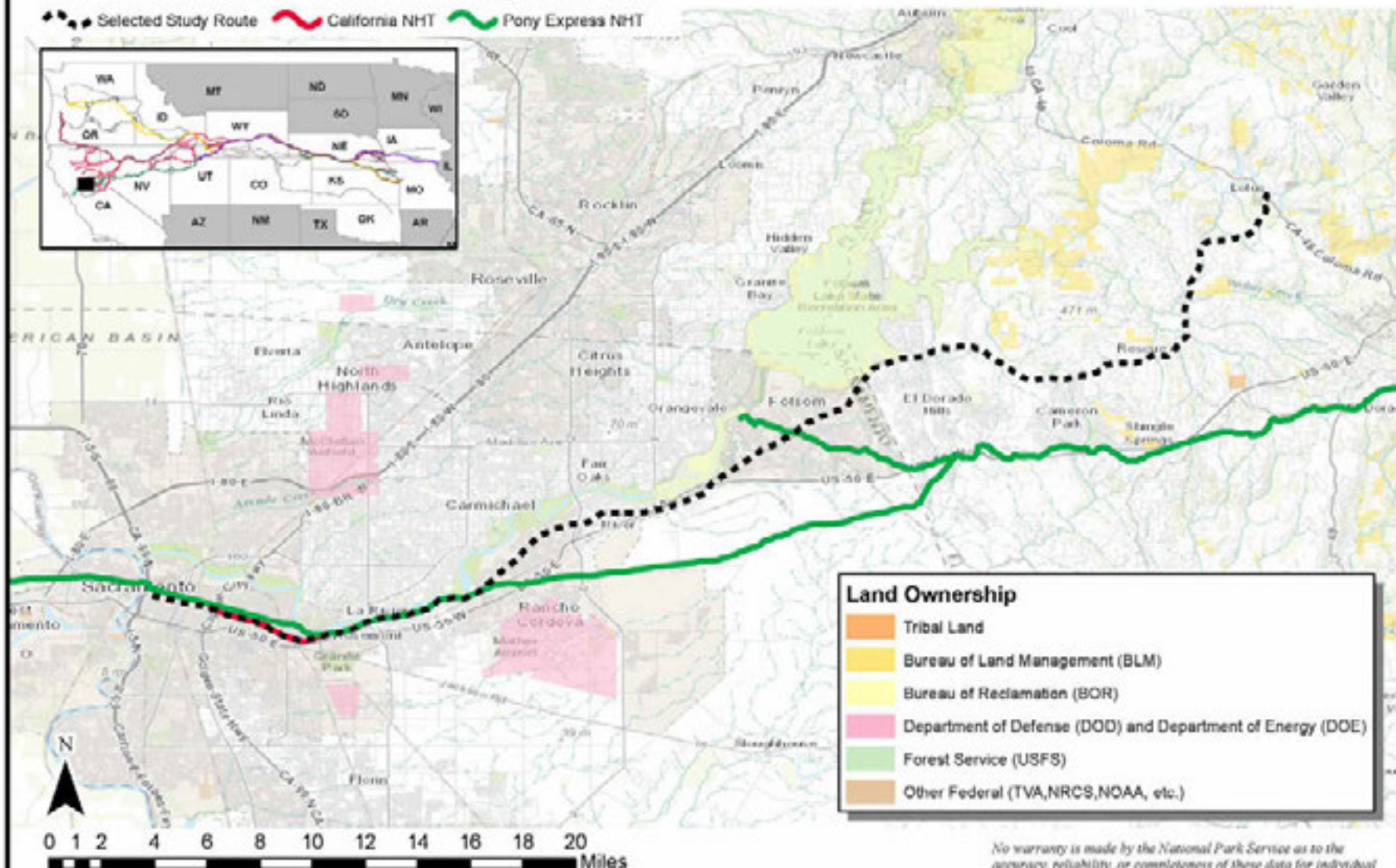






## 66. Sacramento-Coloma Wagon Road

Selected Study Route California NHT Pony Express NHT



Produced by National Trails Intermountain Region

FILE: 49a06\_8\_Sx11June\_2015\_COP

No warranty is made by the National Park Service as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.

15 May 2015

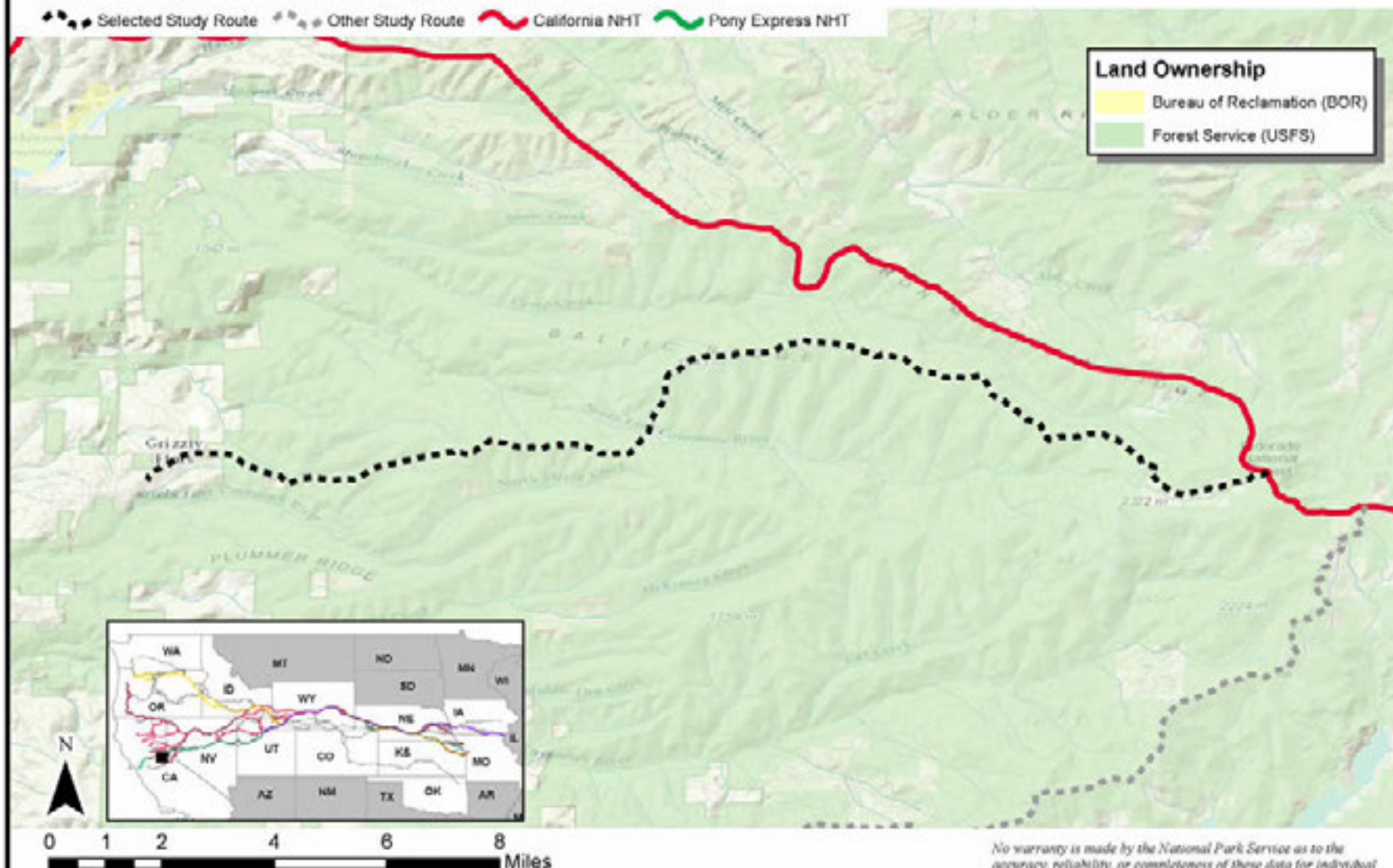
Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NMEL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, Mapbox India, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community





## 67. Grizzly Flat Cutoff (Grizzly Flat Road)

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT Pony Express NHT



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15 May 2015

FILE: 48uak\_8\_Sx11June\_2015\_DOP

Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NMEL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, Mapbox India, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

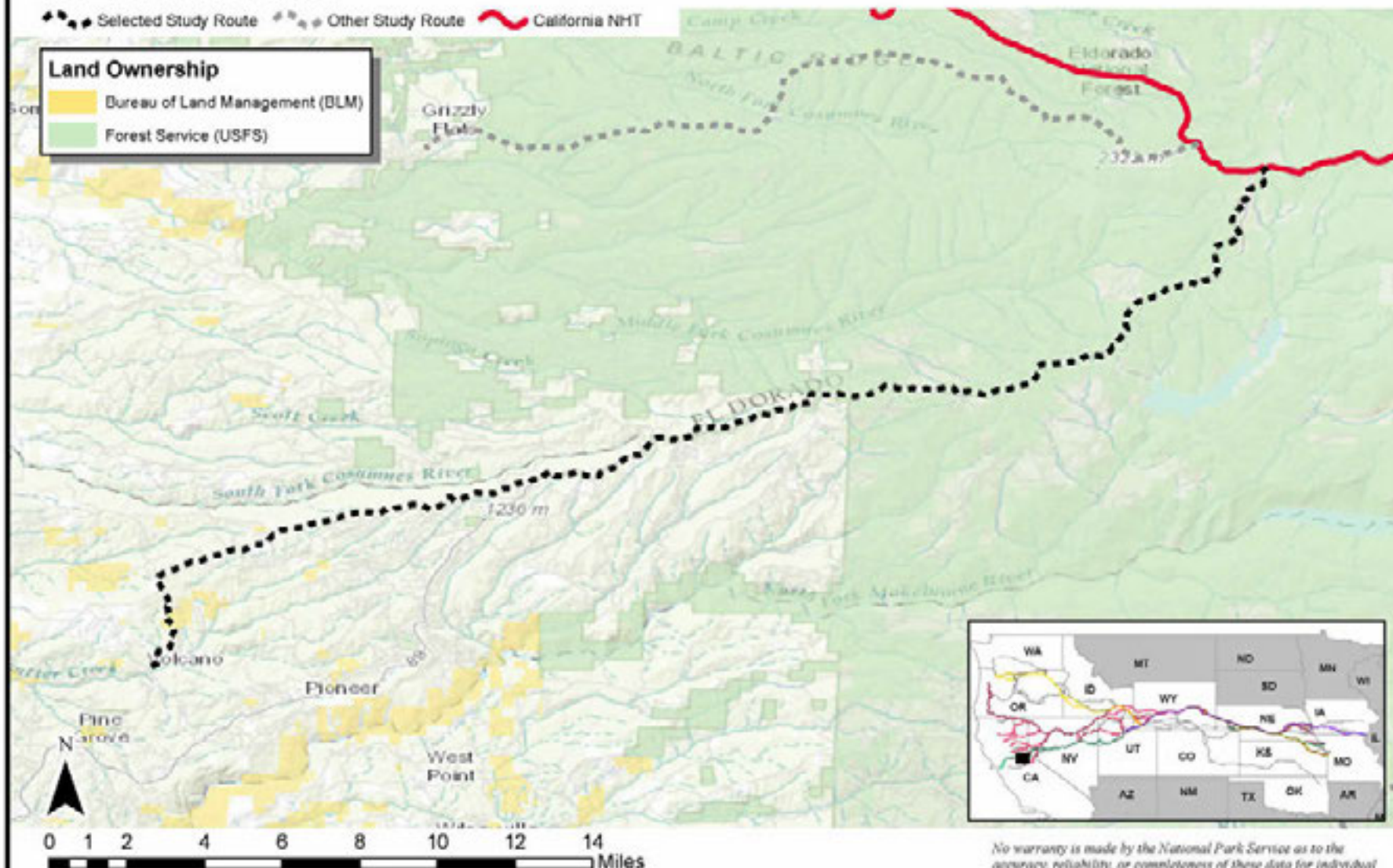


## 68. Volcano Road

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT

### Land Ownership

- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Forest Service (USFS)



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15 May 2015

FILE: 48a06\_8\_Sx1110and\_2015\_DOP

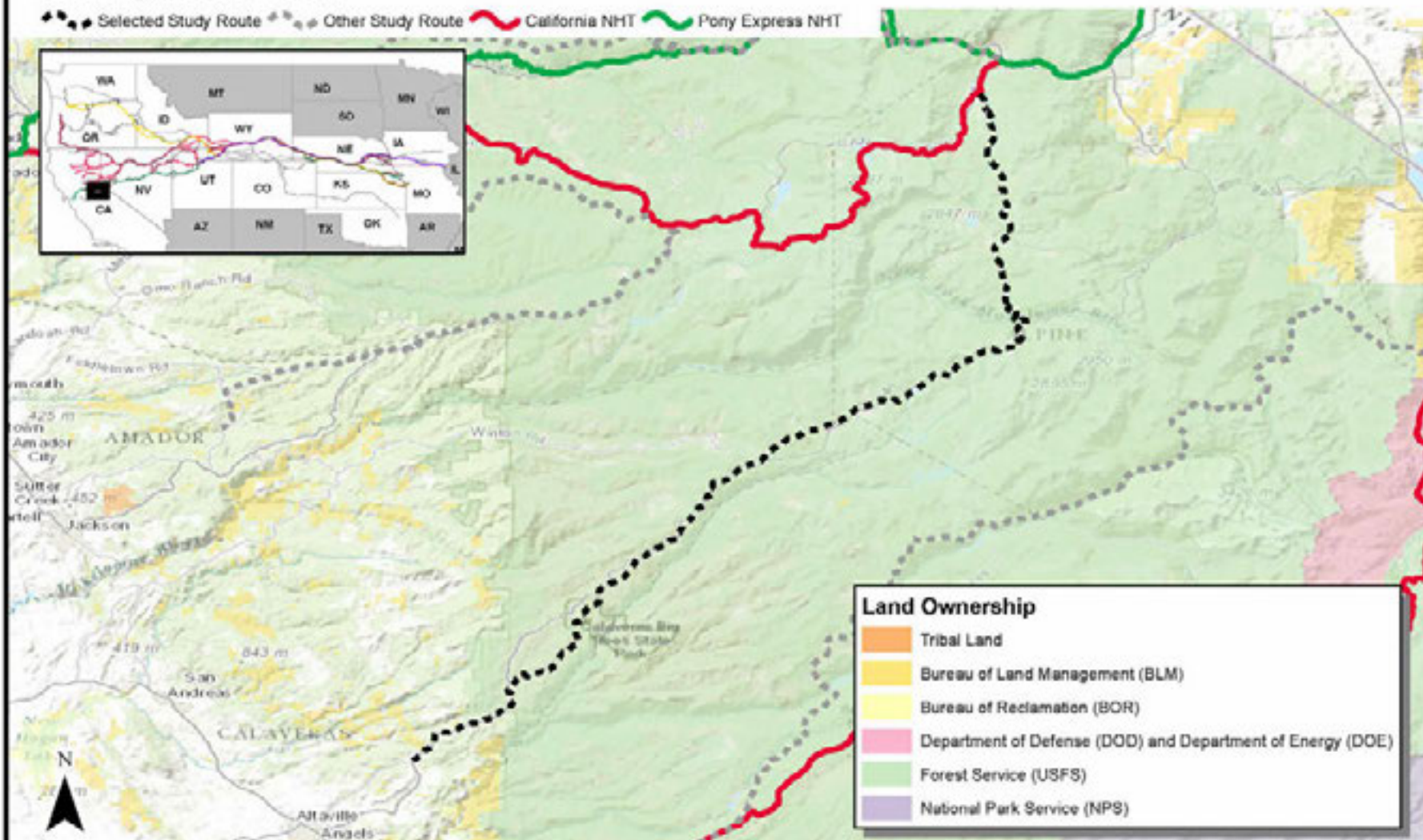
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, MapboxIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community





## 69. Big Tree Road

Selected Study Route Other Study Route California NHT Pony Express NHT



0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20  
Miles

Produced by National Trails Intermountain Region

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29 September 2015

FILE: 49a06\_8\_6x11land\_2015\_DOP

Data Sources: NPS, BSR, US Census Bureau, NMEL  
Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, MapboxIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community







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